

New Bedford's Buttonwood Park Zoo gives home to two orphaned Massachusetts fawns

The Buttonwood Park Zoo has a long history of providing forever homes to orphaned and injured native wildlife, thanks to a strong partnership with the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife, or MassWildlife – and 2021 has proven to be no exception.

In early summer months, MassWildlife placed a female white-tailed deer fawn at BPZ00, who was believed to have been orphaned at less than ten days old in South Dartmouth. Weeks later, she was joined by a second female fawn found alone in Western Massachusetts. They are the first white-tailed deer to inhabit BPZ00 since 2017.

The two fawns, now affectionately referred to as Autumn and Olive, were only weeks old when they arrived at BPZ00 and required hand-rearing by animal care staff. After approximately two months of bottle feeding, weight checks and completing the required quarantine, the fawns are ready to venture into a temporary habitat near their future home in the Zoo's bison habitat this weekend.



Home being bottle-fed by a zookeeper. Buttonwood Park Zoo photo.

"As part of our mission related to environmental education and the conservation of wildlife, the Zoo is proud to provide homes to many native species that are injured or orphaned in the wild," said Zoo Director Keith Lovett. "The Zoo, who has a long history in managing deer, will work to educate our guests on the impact humans can have on local wildlife and actions that can be taken to minimize our imprint on the environment."

Eventually, Autumn and Olive will move into the bison habitat, a roughly $\frac{1}{2}$ acre space that the fawns will share with Sarah the bison and approximately 16 species of waterfowl.

The Zoo is located at 425 Hawthorn Street in New Bedford and is open from 9:00 am until 5:00 pm daily throughout the

summer. Ticket prices for non-New Bedford Residents are \$10 for adults/\$6 for children 3-12; Ticket prices for New Bedford Residents are \$7.50 for adults/\$4.50 for children 3-12. For more information, visit www.bpzoo.org



Buttonwood Park Zoo photo.

About White-tailed Deer

White-tailed deer can survive in a variety of terrestrial habitats, from the big woods of northern Maine to the deep saw grass and hammock swamps of Florida. Ideal white-tailed deer habitat would contain dense thickets (in which to hide and move about) and edges (which furnish food). White-tailed deer fawns nurse for 8 to 10 weeks before they are weaned.

Young males leave their mother after one year, but young females often stay with their mother for two years. Nervous and shy animals, white-tailed deer wave their tails characteristically from side to side when they are startled and fleeing. They are extremely agile and may bound at speeds of up to 30 miles per hour. White-tailed deer are also good swimmers and often enter large streams and lakes to escape predators, insects or to visit islands.