

Two Deer Resting

It is still winter here. Spring is slow in coming.

I took this photo a few days ago. It has been a hard winter for deer. Cold and long with deep snow. About a dozen deer have been hanging around the farmstead lately. There is bare ground here, hay, plowed trails and perhaps most important, woven wire fences. Those fences protect the deer from dogs and coyotes. I drop a little feed for them also.

The two deer in the photo were following the main herd but stopped to rest in this thicket of birch and oaks. The large object in the upper left is a hay bale. The blue barrel to the upper right is in the horse arena, left over from fall barrel racing.

The larger deer is a doe. The smaller is her yearling fawn from last spring.

The deer herd crossed a fence to the right but these two stopped to rest. They rested about an hour. I thought it was odd.

The deer got up to move but stood before the fence. The fence is about four feet high. Normally an easy jump for a deer.

Then I noticed through binoculars that the right rear leg of the yearling was quivering. The yearling turned its head to lick that leg. It was then I saw that the leg was broken. The leg was straight but there was a lump about twice the normal diameter. It was the narrow leg bone. The break was eight inches above the hoof.

The doe waited patiently. Then she also licked the wound.

Animals lick wounds for several reasons. Licking helps clean a fresh or open wound. The massage effect of licking lessens pain and stimulates blood flow for healing. Saliva is medicinal. It contains both germicides and growth promoting chemicals.

After a few minutes, the doe leapt the fence and again waited on the far side.

The yearling pulled its body together and jumped.

It landed well.

The two deer walked away safely.

The deer was most likely hit by a car within the past weeks.

I believe the bone will mend and the deer will live to enjoy summer. Tom