

## **Hobbled fawn is rescued but dies after illegal trap removed by officials**

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### **Body**

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Oct. 14-- Oct. 14--Despite a valiant effort by La Ca ñada Flintridge residents and state wildlife officials to rescue a fawn spotted on Sept. 20 with a **trap** stuck on its leg, the creature died Saturday after being extricated from the likely **illegal** device.

Lia Lee was one of several Paradise Valley neighbors who helped coordinate a rescue effort after receiving an email from a member of the homeowner 's association to be on the lookout for the injured fawn.

"It 's been so long this poor thing has been suffering, " she said. "It was very skinny. You could see its bones -- it definitely wouldn 't have survived long."

Concerned neighbors dialed city hall, the Pasadena Humane Society, U.S. Forest Service and California Department of Fish and Wildlife, the last of which has the authority over such matters.

A CDFW biologist installed a camera in Newsom 's backyard on Sept. 25 but determined sightings were not consistent enough for a capture to be arranged. A biologist agreed to come on Oct. 6, but the visit was called off when it grew too dark.

Lee sent the department a complaint and the matter was escalated to CDFW Capt. John Laughlin, who oversees 26 officers in North Los Angeles, Santa Barbara and Ventura counties. Laughlin visited the neighborhood on Oct. 8. and responded to resident sightings throughout the week.

When the deer was seen Saturday in the backyard of resident Steve Newsom, wildlife officials sprang into action. The fawn was in the company of a doe and young buck but was too hobbled to escape the tranquilizer gun, Laughlin said Monday.

"The leg was probably swollen to four or five times the normal size, " the captain said of its injury, estimating the **trap** may have been there for months. "We had to pull a piece of the **trap** out of its leg -- I 'd never seen anything like it before."

A biologist was treating the fawn when it died unexpectedly, Laughlin said.

Conibear, or "body- gripping, " **traps** use pressure rather than teeth to hold and kill prey. Once thought humane for delivering an instant kill, they often snag smaller unintended victims and leave them struggling for days.

While California 's Fish and Game Code defines limited allowable uses for conibear **traps**, using unregistered or unmarked **traps** is **illegal**. CDFW employs law enforcement officers to investigate **illegal trapping**, a misdemeanor offense that can incur fines and even probation, but Laughlin said locating offenders is difficult.

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"I doubt we 'll find a trapper running around La Ca ñada, " he said, guessing the trap that ensnared the fawn may have been placed by someone to thwart a nuisance species or possibly by a curious youth.

Lee on Sunday penned a letter to CDFW praising the "super- human " efforts of Laughlin 's team. She described Saturday 's failed rescue attempt as an excruciating experience.

"It wasn 't the outcome we wanted, " she said. "We tried everything humanly possible to do the right thing. I can 't believe anyone would use those traps on anything."

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