



# Dakota Information Card

## How the Fawn Got It's Spots

Long ago, when the world was new, Wakan Tanka, The Great Mystery, was walking around. As he walked, he spoke to himself of the many things he had done to help the four legged ones and the birds survive.

"It is good," Wakan Tanka Said. "I have given Mountain Lion sharp claws and Grizzly Bear great strength. It is so much easier now for them to survive. I have given Wolf sharp teeth and I have given his little brother, Coyote, quick wits. It is much easier now for them to survive. I have given Beaver a flat tail and webbed feet to swim beneath the water and teeth which cut down trees and I have given slow moving Porcupine quills to protect itself. Now, it is easier for them to survive. I have given the birds their feathers and the ability to fly so that they may escape their enemies. I have given speed to the deer and the rabbit so that it will be hard for there hunters to catch them. Truly, it is now much easier for them to survive."

However, as the Great Mystery spoke, a mother deer came up to him. Trailing behind, was a fawn, on her shaky new born legs.

"Great One," she said "It is true that you have given many gifts to the creatures of the forest to help them survive. You gave me great speed and now my enemies find it hard to catch me. My speed is my protection. But, my little one here, does not yet have speed. It is easy for our enemies, with their sharp teeth and their claws to catch her. If my children do not survive, how can my people live?"

"Wica yaka pelo!" said Wakan Taka, the Great One. "you have spoken truly, you are right. Have your little one come here and I will help her."

Then Wakan Tanka made paint from the earth and the plants. He painted spots upon the fawn's body so that, when she lay still, her color blended in with the earth and she could not be seen. Then the Great Mystery breathed upon her, taking away her scent.

"Now", Wakan Tanka said, "your little ones will always be safe if they only remain still when they are away from your side. Nine of your enemies will see your little ones or be able to pick up their scent."

So, it has been from that day on. When a young deer is too small and weak to run swiftly, it is covered with spots that blend in with the earth. It has no scent and it remains very close to the earth when its mother is not by its side. When it has grown enough to have speed that Wakan Tanka gave its people, it then, loses those spots it once needed to survive.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Story Taken From: [http://www.felid.org/activities/page\\_15.htm#top](http://www.felid.org/activities/page_15.htm#top)