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GIVE WILDLIFE ROOM TO LIVE



Center for Wildlife Information

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National Fish and Wildlife Foundation

National Park
FOUNDATION



PHOTOGRAPHS TAKEN WITH 400 TO 800MM LENS BY CHUCK BARTLEBAUGH

IT'S OUR RESPONSIBILITY TO GIVE THEM ROOM TO LIVE

We all share the responsibility for our own safety and that of animals that we observe or photograph. As the number of people visiting our public land exceeds 42 million per year, the chances of some people encountering wild animals increases. Inappropriate human behavior can lead to confrontations that result in injury or death either for the animals or people.

Center for Wildlife Information has found that educating public land visitors can positively influence how people interact with wild animals. Visitors learn to recognize that their actions can lead to severe stress for animals and that an animal that feels pressured may react aggressively. This behavior is an animal's only form of communication and protection. Concerned visitors understand the importance of observing and photographing all wild animals from a distance, as well as the negative effects of feeding wildlife.

As you read through this brochure, remember that it was written to help you become more knowledgeable about wildlife. Get involved by helping others understand how to protect animals while enjoying them. The information in this brochure was gathered during eight years of observation of human behavior on our public lands.

Chuck Bartlebaugh, Director, Center for Wildlife Information

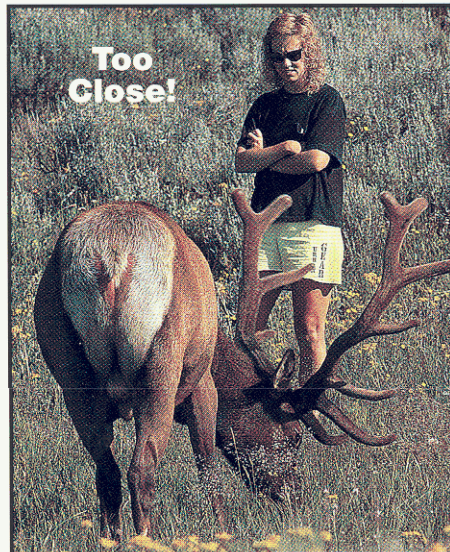
HOW CLOSE IS TOO CLOSE?

Wild animals should always be allowed to carry out their normal behavior without interruption. Since responses of individual wild animals will differ, even within the same species, there is no set distance that is "too close." However, you can watch for warning signs that will indicate when you are too close

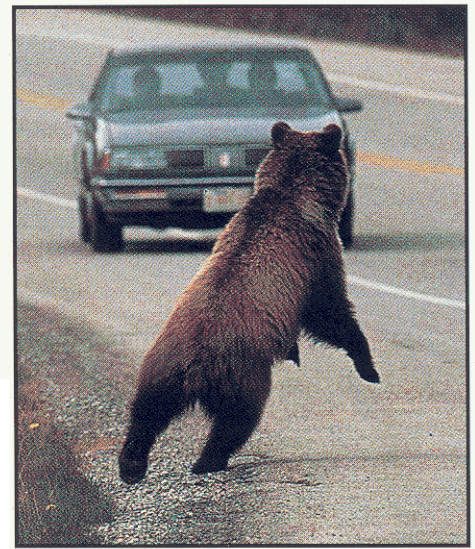
If an animal moves away from you, turns its back toward you, stops eating, changes direction of travel, stands when it is resting, or becomes aggressive, you are too close. The consequences of approaching wildlife can be very serious.

Animals that have been approached too closely have:

1. Been startled, running into traffic where they have been hit by vehicles.
2. Lost footing on cliffs and fallen.
3. Fled suddenly and suffered injury or death trying to escape.
4. Been separated from their young or abandoned their nest.



5. Been distracted from watching for predators.
6. Acquired a human scent track that can lure predators to nests or young.
7. Abandoned an important food source, reducing their chances for survival.
8. Responded aggressively without warning, posing a danger to those watching them.
9. Read local regulations on the safe distance to maintain from wildlife.

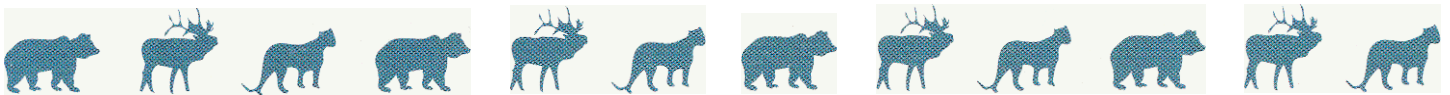


DON'T FEED THE ANIMALS

You probably have heard that feeding animals can put you and your friends in danger. It can also be harmful to the animals being fed.

- Animals that are fed along roads tend to frequent road edges for handouts. This results in car-animal accidents.
- Animals that become accustomed to human food may eat aluminum foil, plastic, and other wrappings. This can severely damage their digestive systems, often causing death.
- Most animal's digestive systems are not suited for consumption of human food. Poor diet results in tooth decay, ulcers, malformations, arthritis, and other diseases.
- If it has an odor, animals may try to eat refuse. Do not leave boxes, wrappers, or cans of any type where animals can find them (for example, film or cigarette packages).

**RESPECT WILDLIFE,
FEAR YOUR BEHAVIOR
AND ACTIONS.**



RESPECT ALL BEARS EQUALLY. ALL BEARS CAN BE DANGEROUS!

There is no guaranteed safe distance. The minimum safe distance in many cases will be 500 to 1,000 feet, but there is no guarantee that this is always sufficient.

When in bear country, make your presence known by talking loudly, clapping or occasionally calling out. Be heard!

All bears can run as fast as horses, both uphill and downhill.

All bears can climb trees, some better than others.

A bear's eyesight is much better than most people believe. Don't be fooled.

Avoid direct eye contact. It is often interpreted by bears and other animals as a challenge or a threat.

A bear standing on its hind legs usually wants a better view and only wants more information.

On four legs, a bear may show agitation by swaying its head from side to side, making huffing noises and clacking its teeth.

A charge or retreat may follow. Flattened ears and raised hair on the back of the neck indicate aggressive intent. If a bear runs with a stiff bouncing gait, it may be a false charge.

Never run from a bear. Back away slowly.

ALL ANIMALS CAN BE DANGEROUS

Bears get the most media attention when they are involved in confrontations with people; however, other wild animals have been involved in more confrontations which lead to serious injury and fatalities. Keep this in mind the next time you see anyone, especially children, approaching wildlife. In all species, both males and females are potentially dangerous.

Many public land animals have become accustomed to people and unfortunately will allow people to come very close before responding. This does not mean they are tame, like pets or farm animals, but that the safe distance between the people and the animals has decreased. This only means that when flight or fight is chosen, a retreat to a safe distance for people may be too late. The animal has less time to determine whether to fight or flee when it feels threatened. When it does choose,

a visible warning is not always apparent.

1. Buffalo may look slow but are very fast. They also have a short temper. Buffalo will stomp, use their horns and their massive body weight to gore or otherwise injure what they consider to be a threat.
2. Moose will charge—running, kicking, and stomping—when they feel threatened. It only takes a small provocation (a person's approach, a dog's bark, or the scent of a coyote) to change a passive moose into a dangerous moose.
3. Deer can cause injuries, sometimes death, by kicking and using their antlers without warning. Keep a safe distance.
4. Bighorn sheep and mountain goats will butt people, breaking bones and inflicting puncture wounds. This is a normal form of communication for them. Your only protection is to keep a safe distance.

GESTURES AND WARNINGS

If you can see them, you are too close!

Gestures and warnings are used for communications between all animals, big and small. In response, other animals can quickly retreat from potentially dangerous confrontations.

People, on the other hand, do not have the speed or agility to retreat to safety.

The most dangerous animals are cute, appear "friendly," or seem to be disinterested in you.



5. Chipmunks, squirrels, rabbits, foxes, raccoons, and other small animals can carry rabies and Rocky Mountain spotted fever. They can also inflict bites and scratches vulnerable to infection.
6. Many birds will abandon eggs or young in the nest if disturbed by people approaching.
7. All animals are especially dangerous during their mating season. This includes birds such as hawks, swans and herons.
8. Never surround any animal with a group of people. A startled animal may charge right through a group, knocking down adults as well as children and inflicting severe injuries.



CAMPGROUND CAMPING

Don't become over-confident when camping in a large campground. Animals may wander through at any time, especially at night. Campground animals are more likely to be "habituated" (that is, used to people and their food) and thus can be very dangerous. Special precautions are necessary. Keep a clean camp.

- Store all food and food-related items including pet foods and canned goods inside a hard-sided vehicle when not in use.
- Deposit all garbage in wildlife-proof trash containers.
- Contain trailer waste-water, and dispose of it frequently in the proper facilities.
- Keep pets on a leash at **all** times. They look like prey and can draw predators to your camp.
- Use a flashlight and stay alert when walking in the campground at night.
- Inspect the campground for animal signs, especially bears. Watch for careless campers near you who may attract animals.
- Get involved. Ask other campers who are not observing precautions to improve their camp for their safety and yours.
- Contact public land officials for special precautions required in bear country.



CHILDREN AND WILDLIFE

Teach your children how they can help protect wildlife by protecting themselves. Wild animals, unlike those encountered in petting zoos or farms, pose special dangers.

Remember:

1. Children are the similar size of some predators' natural prey.
2. Children should always be within immediate sight and reach.
3. Children should be told not to play in or near dense bush.
4. Children should avoid running along trails or areas with dense bush.
5. Children should not make animal-like sounds while hiking or playing.
6. Children should be warned not to approach animals, especially baby animals.
7. Children should never be encouraged to pet, feed, or pose for a photo with animals in the wild — even if they appear tame.

ALONG THE ROAD

- Allow animals to cross the road unobstructed.
- Animals often travel in pairs or groups. If one runs in front of you, watch for others to follow.
- Do not lure animals to your car with food or throw food at them. This encourages them to frequent the road area, resulting in collisions and fatalities.
- Observe or photograph animals, especially bears, from your car. Do not drive close to animals. Many animals can and will cause serious damage if they feel threatened by the presence of your vehicle.
- Do not park on the roadway: always park in turnouts.
- Always observe regulations.



ALL WILDLIFE HAS THE POTENTIAL TO BE DANGEROUS WHEN COMBINED WITH INAPPROPRIATE HUMAN BEHAVIOR



HIKING IN BEAR COUNTRY

Bears are a special case. A bear that shows aggression towards public land visitors or accepts food will be destroyed because of the possible threat to public safety. Help protect bears by protecting yourself.

- Stay informed about recent bear activity in the area.
- Leave a travel plan with a friend, and sign in and out at the trailhead so that someone will know when to expect your return.
- Avoid sudden encounters and habitat destruction. Stay on the trail.
- Hike in groups to avoid surprising bears.
- Hike during daylight hours only.
- Make human sounds by talking, singing or clapping your hands. Avoid high-pitched voices.
- Stay alert. Be aware of your surroundings. The potential for a bear encounter always exists. Look for paw prints, droppings, fresh diggings, logs torn apart, and

rocks turned over. These signal that a bear is active in the area.

- It is easy to become absorbed in photography, bird-watching, or sightseeing. Stay alert. Stay alive.
- Bear food supplies such as berries, spawning fish, and animal carcasses should be recognized and avoided.
- Watch for noisy streams and wind directions that may mask your sound and scent.
- All bears have the ability to climb trees, some better than others.
- Just because you don't see bears does not mean they are not close by. Grizzly bears hide or make day-beds in thick brush, often near trails.
- Always carry a used bandanna, shirt or parka that you can drop easily if you have a close encounter with a bear. Avoid dropping food, this will only encourage the bear's aggressiveness towards other hikers.
- Animals other than bears account for most wildlife-related injuries. Treat all animals with respect and leave a safe distance.



FISHING

- Obey fishing area restrictions. Spawning areas are natural attractions for bears. Bears will aggressively defend a food supply.
- Careful handling of fish will reduce odors on your clothes and hands. Wash your hands and change clothes before you retire.
- Dispose of fish guts properly. Small amounts can be dumped into a fast moving stream or far out in a large body of water. Pierce the air bladder so that it will sink.
- Fish guts may also be burned in a very hot fire. Never bury fish guts. Animals will dig them up.
- Remain alert. Always watch for bears and bear signs. Stay out of dense brush next to streams.
- As with hiking, make your presence known by making human sounds. Occasionally call out or clap your hands.

CAMPING AND COOKING

1. Obtain proper permits, and camp in designated areas so that you can be contacted if necessary.
2. Learn to recognize bear signs. Don't camp in an area with recent bear signs or where food or garbage are found.
3. Always sleep in a tent (not under the stars). A tent can serve as a psychological barrier to a bear.
4. Total cleanliness (of yourself and your camp) is a must to prevent smells that could attract bears. Avoid scented deodorants, soaps and cosmetics.
5. Avoid cooking odorous foods. Cook downwind and at least 100 yards from where you will sleep.
6. Plan meals so that there are no leftovers. Store food in airtight containers.
7. Hang food at least 10-12 feet up and 6-8 feet away from any side supports. Make sure you hang your food away from camp.
8. Combustible garbage should be burned completely to eliminate odors.
9. Non-combustible garbage should be carried out — never buried. Animals will dig it up.
10. Dump dishwater containing food particles well away from camp.
11. Do not sleep in the clothes you wear while cooking.
12. Packs, tents, and sleeping bags should be kept free of food odors.
13. Human sexual activity, deodorant, perfume or aftershave lotion may attract bears.
14. Camp in open areas away from trails and thick cover. Bears often use trails designed for people and find security in dense cover.
15. Don't camp near a bear's natural food source such as a berry patch, fish-spawning stream, or animal carcass.
16. Rehearse what you and your group will do if a bear appears.
17. Place tents in a line. Space tents apart so that animals can travel freely between them and not feel trapped.
18. Don't litter. Many animals, including bears, will eat anything that has unusual scents (for example film containers, plastic bags, or cans). This can make them sick and can even be fatal.
19. Do not bring your pet. Pets are usually prohibited in back-country.

PHOTOGRAPHING WILDLIFE

Purchasing a camera does not give anyone permission to put animals, birds or marine life under stress.

- All animals should only be photographed from a vehicle, observation area, or from a distance with a 400 mm or longer lens.
- Remain alert to potential dangers in your eagerness to take the perfect photo; 500 to 1,000 feet is recommended to avoid provoking large animals.
- Never surprise an animal. Retreat at any sign of stress or aggression.
- Avoid direct eye contact, even through the lens.
- Don't crouch or take a stance that may appear aggressive to a wild animal. Avoid following or chasing as the animal may respond by charging.
- Never try to herd an animal to a different location.
- Don't make sounds to startle animals, especially animal-like sounds or wails.

- Never surround or crowd an animal.
- Avoid occupied dens and nests.
- Watch other people in the area. Are they putting you in danger?
- Stay out of dense brush.

How professional photographers get great photos:

- By using captive and conditioned animals at game farms.
- By photographing in controlled areas like Churchill (Canada) for polar bears; or the McNeal River Bear Sanctuary (Alaska) for grizzlies.
- By using powerful telephoto lenses.
- By being patient and devoting many years to getting desired photos in responsible ways.



TOO CLOSE!—Example of photographer approaching too close, not using a telephoto lens, putting himself in danger and stressing the bull elk.

**YOU CAN MAKE
A DIFFERENCE!**

Teachers, students, nature centers, zoos and photo clubs can make a difference by

Preparing special lesson plans, class reports, signs, brochures, and conducting seminars to educate wildlife enthusiasts to view, photograph and enjoy our wildlife treasures safely and responsibly.

**TOGETHER
WE CAN ALL
MAKE A
DIFFERENCE!**

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For a list of our wildlife stewardship teaching supplements, posters, gift cards, and to schedule our multiple projector slide show or seminar, write to us at:

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