

WILDLIFE VIEWING TIPS



Getting out and viewing wildlife can be a great pastime for people of all ages. Join in the fun!

1) Planning is essential before any viewing excursion.

- Where to go – do some research before you go to locate the best wildlife viewing sites.
- What to look for – decide which animals you would like to look for and find out where they live.
- What to bring – appropriate clothing for the weather, emergency supplies, binoculars, water, hat, sunscreen, field guides, camera, cell phone or two-way radio (leave dogs at home).
- Let someone know where you are and when you expect to be back.

2) Timing – The best time to see wildlife is at dawn and dusk, when most animals are active. They will be feeding and looking for water at these times of day. Nocturnal animals such as bats and snakes can be seen at night with proper lighting, but check the regulations on spotlighting in certain areas.

3) Where to look – Wildlife needs four things – food, water, shelter, space. Find these components of their habitat and you have a better chance of seeing them.

4) Patience, silence, and concealment – These are the best assets you can have when viewing wildlife.

5) What to look for – Even if you cannot spot the animals, you can look for signs of wildlife's presence. Look for tracks in the soil, different kinds of scat, feathers, fur, bones, chewed vegetation, nests, burrows, and resting areas.

6) Be respectful – Do not disturb wildlife or the places that they live. Keep a safe distance and watch where you walk. Don't attempt to

touch baby animals. Do not harass animals in any way.

7) Don't feed wildlife! – They are perfectly capable of feeding themselves and human food is often harmful to them. Drawing a wild animal in too close is dangerous, both for humans and for the animals.

Specific Animals:

1) Birds – Be careful – some birds, especially during nesting season, are protective of their territory. Do not approach nests.

2) Bighorn sheep – Even if you see these animals close to town, remember they are still wild animals. Keep a safe distance and do not approach them. Leave the area if they start to jump and buck.

3) Reptiles – Be aware of safety in reptile areas. Do not cross the path of snakes. Stand still and let them pass. Do not attempt to pick up a snake or gila monster.

4) Rodents – Be aware that rodents bite, and some carry disease. Never attempt to pick one up. Be careful if camping where mice feces may be present.

Wildlife viewing can be a rewarding experience if you remember that you are in the animals' home.

Get in the habit of practicing outdoor etiquette:

– Keep on trails or stay on hard surfaces if there are no trails. Cause as little disturbance to the area as you can.

– Pack out your trash and don't litter. Even organic "trash" such as orange peels can last a long time in the environment.

– Avoid Sensitive Areas, such as streams, rocky areas, and biological crusts. These areas are fragile and take a long time to recover from disturbance.

– Respect the rights of others to view the wildlife, too.

– Finally, enjoy the view!