

Living Safely with Wildlife

Colorado is known for its abundance and variety of wildlife. Many residents enjoy the presence of wildlife in urban areas; however, close encounters with wildlife can pose health and safety risks to people and domestic animals. In most cases, the key to living safely with wildlife is to *leave wild animals alone*. Most potentially dangerous encounters occur when people fail to do this.

Follow these guidelines to avoid conflict with wildlife in your area:

➤ **Do not feed wildlife.**

Intentional or inadvertent feeding is the cause of most problems with wildlife. Store household garbage in a secure location, keep pet food inside, fence or screen vegetable gardens and orchards, and place bird feeders where they are not accessible to other animals. Do not discard litter in areas accessible to wildlife. It is illegal to feed deer, bighorn sheep, mountain goats, pronghorn and elk in Colorado. It is also illegal to feed any wild animal in Colorado's state and national parks.

➤ **Do not touch or handle wildlife.**

Most wild animals try to avoid human contact. If an animal lets you get close or pick it up, it is probably unhealthy or dangerous. Handling wild animals places people at risk for infectious diseases like rabies, plague, tularemia and many others. It is illegal to attempt wildlife rehabilitation without a state-issued permit. It is also illegal to keep most species of native wildlife as pets in Colorado.

➤ **Protect your home from wildlife.**

Keeping unwanted wildlife out of homes, buildings, and yards is critical in preventing unwanted encounters. Close holes around the foundation of your house, cover window wells, screen chimneys and vents, and seal cracks and holes larger than ¼ inch in diameter.

➤ **Do not allow your pet to interact with wildlife.**

Wild animals can inflict bite wounds or other serious injuries on your pet. They can also expose your pet to infectious diseases that are communicable to people. Do not allow dogs or cats to roam freely. Always keep your dog leashed in parks and wilderness areas. Discourage your cat from hunting by attaching a bell to its collar.

If you are bitten by a wild animal, seek medical attention immediately and then contact a Disease Intervention Specialist at Tri-County Health Department at 303-220-9200.

If you have other problems with wild animals, contact the Division of Wildlife office at 303-291-7227.



Eleven offices serving the residents of Adams, Arapahoe and Douglas Counties
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