



Grand Canyon Council BSA

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WILDLIFE GUIDE FOR CAMPERS AND LEADERS



DISCOVER YOUR PATH





GRAND CANYON COUNCIL INC. **BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA**

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Safety Around Animals at Camp



The Grand Canyon Council maintains multiple properties located throughout Arizona. Each camp is inhabited year-round by a native population of wildlife that depends on the land for their survival. While viewing animals in their natural habitat always is a pleasure, please remember that they are the permanent residents—we are the visitors. If we treat animals with respect and give them sufficient space so they aren't threatened by our presence, they seldom will present a threat to our safety. However, when provoked, threatened, or cornered, any animal instinctively will protect itself, sometimes by scratching, biting, or charging. In other cases, animals that have lost their fear of humans and now are habituated to humans (often as a direct result of feeding or

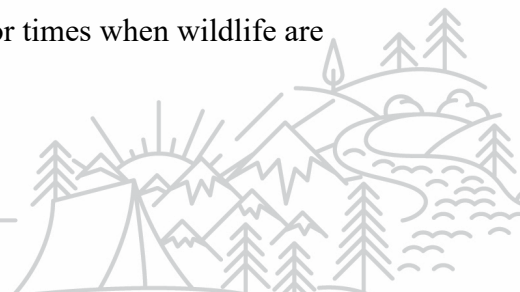
access to food resources) can become bold or aggressive, which may lead to potential injury.

Although each animal has its own characteristic behaviors, they all require food for survival. If the natural habitat does not provide sufficient food resources to sustain wildlife, those animals must find new sources or move to areas that provide better opportunities. Where people are careless in the handling of food or garbage, it is inevitable that conflicts between people and wildlife will arise. It often is easier for animals to take advantage of readily available human-provided resources than it is to spend significant amounts of time and energy searching for food in a depleted habitat or to abandon an existing habitat and find a better territory. Therefore, success in avoiding trouble with wildlife (and black bears in particular) depends most on how well you safeguard food items (and associated trash) within camp. We all must learn to live responsibly with wildlife.

Young wild animals sometimes stray from their parents or are left hidden and alone purposefully by the adults. Although they may appear to be lost or abandoned, they probably are not. In most cases, the adults know exactly where the youngster is. "Taking in" an apparently lost or abandoned young animal usually does more harm than good. Wild animals should be left untouched where they were encountered. However, if an animal is encountered that obviously is sick or injured, notify the Camp Ranger.

General Wildlife and Habitat Stewardship

- Plan your trip to avoid critical or sensitive wildlife habitats or times when wildlife are nesting or rearing their young.





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- Hike on designated trails only.
- Learn about wildlife through quiet observation. Quick movements and loud noises are stressful to animals. In hot or cold weather, disturbance can affect an animal's ability to withstand the rigorous environment.
- Do not attempt to take photographs of wild animals unless you can do so without disturbing them or altering their behavior in any way. This is best accomplished by using a zoom or telephoto lens.
- Allow animals free access to water sources by giving them the buffer space they need to feel secure. Ideally, camps should be located 200 feet or more from water sources. Avoid waterholes at night since that is when desert dwellers are most active.
- Washing and human waste disposal must be carefully done so the environment is not polluted and animals and aquatic life are not injured. Swimming in lakes or streams is OK in most instances but in desert areas; leave scarce water holes undisturbed and unpolluted so animals may drink from them.
- Never feed wildlife or allow them to obtain human food, even scraps. Wildlife that obtain human food become nuisance animals that are often killed by cars, dogs, or predators because they left the cover of safety of their normal habitat. Such animals often get into human trash, eating food wrappers such as plastic that becomes trapped and clogs their digestive systems. Human food is also not nutritious for wildlife and can cause tooth decay, gum infection, and ulcers. Then wildlife become dead wildlife and wardens must be called in to handle the situation.
- Keep a clean campsite. Trash your trash!
- Keep all food and "smellables" out of your tent.
- Store food, coolers, and "smellables" in a secure troop trailer, bear-proof storage container, or hang them in a bear bag suspended at least 12 feet above the ground and 6 feet away from a tree whenever not in use, especially at night.
- Do not approach, follow closely, or attempt to capture any wild animal. This is true especially with snakes (venomous and non-venomous) and bats.
- Avoid behaviors that may be interpreted as aggressive:
 - Direct eye contact, even through a camera
 - Walking directly toward an animal
 - Following an animal that has chosen to leave
 - Circling or standing around an animal





- Don't mistake passive behavior in an animal as a sign that you are safe around that animal.
- Leave young animals alone; an adult usually is nearby.
- Stay away from and do not touch the carcass of any dead animal.
- Avoid berry patches, which are important food resources for bears.
- If a bear, snake, or other potentially dangerous animal is sighted near any of the primary activity centers in camp, immediately notify a member of the camp staff.

**FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION OR ASSISTANCE,
CONTACT YOUR CAMP DIRECTOR, CAMP STAFF,
OR A CAMP RANGER. YOUR SAFE CAMP EXPERIENCE IS OUR COMMITMENT AND PRIORITY.**



Bats At Camp

Youth camps of all types usually are located in areas that also provide prime habitat for wildlife, including bats. Because many camp buildings often are rustic in construction, they frequently are subject to colonization by roosting bats. However, the simple presence of bats should not be viewed as a dangerous situation, but one worthy of appropriate caution. Campers should avoid handling or approaching any bat they may find. Bats can become infected with rabies and serve as a vector of transmission for that disease (see “Rabies” on page 13).

All buildings in the Grand Canyon Council are inspected regularly for evidence of the presence of bats. Consistent with recommendations of the Arizona Department of Health, bat proofing takes place whenever needed. This includes sealing openings, screening windows and doors, and others means of exclusion. Designated members of the camp staff will take steps to remove bats from occupied buildings, where necessary, using techniques prescribed by the Department of Health.

For questions about how to handle a suspected encounter with a bat, or to report an actual encounter (one resulting in a bite or scratch for which rabies treatment likely will be needed), notify the Camp Ranger, Camp Physician, or Camp Director immediately so that an appropriate response can be implemented. All verified bat encounters are reportable incidents due to the high risk of rabies.





Bears

The State of Arizona has been home to black bears since their earliest ancestors evolved in North America. These large, powerful animals play an important role in the ecosystem. There are no grizzly bears in AZ.

Today, increasing numbers of people live and play in bear country. For many Scouts and leaders, seeing a bear is rare and may be one highlight of your camp experience. Learning about wildlife and being aware of bears' habits will help you fully appreciate these unique animals and the habitat in which they live.

Bears are intelligent and curious animals. They can see color, form, and movement. Although their vision is good, they generally rely on their acute senses of smell and hearing to locate food and warn them of danger. If a bear stands upright or moves closer, it may be trying

to detect smells in the air. This isn't necessarily a sign of aggression, but one worthy of caution.

Black Bears

Black bears, despite their name, are not always black. They may be honey-colored, blonde, brown, reddish-brown (cinnamon), or black. A black bear may have a tan muzzle or a white spot on its chest.

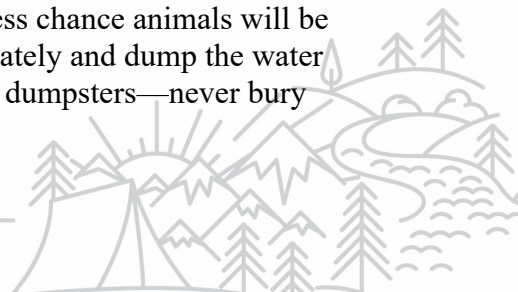
Black bears typically roam over large areas; some home ranges cover hundreds of square miles. Black bears eat both plant and animal foods, but the bulk of their diet usually consists of plant material. The animal foods they eat include ants, grubs, small mammals, and carrion (i.e., animals that already are dead or partially decayed). Above all, the black bear is an opportunist and will take advantage of almost any readily available food source, including “people food.”

Bears may be active anytime, day or night, but most often they are active during the early- to mid-morning and again at or after sunset. They prefer to stay concealed in thick cover, such as dense oak brush, and normally venture into open areas only to get food. When not feeding or looking for food, they rest in day beds, often located next to a log, behind a large tree, on a steep slope, in dense brush, or in the depression left by an uprooted tree. In late summer, black bears try to fatten up in preparation for winter hibernation. During this period, they actively feed for up to 20 hours per day.

Protecting Food and Property

Although black bears generally are shy and avoid contact with humans, there are some precautions you should take to discourage encounters. You are responsible for doing all you can to prevent conflicts with bears.

The best way to prevent food-related conflicts with animals, especially bears, is to keep a clean camp. If you minimize the food odors you create or maintain in your campsite, the less chance animals will be attracted to the area as they move through the habitat. Wash dishes immediately and dump the water away from camp. Collect and transport garbage from the campsite to camp dumpsters—never bury





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trash within the site or throw it in a latrine. Wipe down your table and clean up immediately after eating.

Store your food safely. When possible, store food and coolers in a secure troop trailer or trunk of a locked vehicle parked away from the campsite. Alternatively, store food items or other attractants in bear-proof metal containers located outside the campsite. Where these options are not available, suspend food and other “smellables” in a “bear bag” from a tree at least 12 feet off the ground and 6 feet away from the trunk of the tree. Don't underestimate the ingenuity of a bear!

Black bears generally will not enter a tent with people in it. To avoid creating conditions that may habituate bears to humans, keep all food and food odors out of the tents and away from sleeping bags. At the end of each day, be sure that all scouts have washed any remaining food residue from the face and hands before going to bed. Any clothing worn while cooking that might have food residue or especially grease on it should be hung outside the tent and beyond reach of bears. To a bear, toothpaste, sunscreen, and other personal hygiene items (“smellables”) are viewed as potential food—store them accordingly.

When leaving your campsite, tie the tent flaps open (weather permitting) so that any bear that might pass through the campsite easily can check inside. Assuming that no food remains in the tent, this practice will reduce the likelihood that a bear will destroy the tent trying to get in.

If a Black Bear Visits

A black bear in your campsite requires caution, but not necessarily great alarm. Most black bears are timid enough to be scared away by yelling, waving, and banging pans. Make sure the bear has a clear escape route before trying to scare it. Do not rush toward the bear, throw rocks, use flashbulbs, or directly approach a bear.

People usually are more timid at night than they are during the day, and may be reluctant to try scaring away a bear at night. However, bears can be encouraged to retreat at night as well as by day. If you awaken at night to discover a bear nearby, do not play dead and do not strike the bear. Begin talking in a calm voice to let the bear know you are present. If the bear is several feet away, you may be able to slip out of your sleeping bag and retreat. Slowly back away from the area, do not stare directly at the bear, and do not run—running may provoke the bear into unpredictable behaviors.

Coming between a female bear and her cubs is dangerous. If a cub is nearby, try to move away from it. Be alert—other cubs may be in the area.

Fortunately, unconditioned black bears usually avoid people as much as they do each other. If there is a way to avoid direct contact, bears typically will try to escape the area undetected, if possible.





Bees and Wasps



Both bees and wasps can inflict painful wounds from their sting, but there is an important difference between the two. After stinging you, a wasp simply flies away to potentially sting again. However, when a bee stings you, it leaves behind its stinger apparatus, which, if left embedded and untreated, may cause future problems. You should extract the stinging apparatus (the lancet and its attached venom sack) left behind after a bite by scraping it away using the edge of a credit card or knife blade held nearly perpendicular to the skin. Don't try to squeeze the stinger out of the skin because you may force more venom from the venom sack into the wound. An ice pack applied over the sting should reduce pain and swelling.

If you have a known allergy to bee stings, or have never been stung before, but begin to experience difficulty breathing after being stung, please report to the Health Lodge immediately.

Please note the location of active bee and wasp nests and report that information to the Camp Director or Camp Ranger. Do not purposefully disturb any bee or wasp nest or provoke these insects; stay away from or go around a nest that may lie in your path.

Mosquitoes



Forty different species of mosquitoes have been documented in Arizona, but a relatively small number feed on humans. Several species are known vectors of important diseases, such as West Nile Virus, several forms of encephalitis, and Zika virus.

In general, Grand Canyon Council Camps have few mosquitoes due to lack of habitat—the most common breeding environment for mosquitoes is stagnant water, which can be found in old tires, metal drums or other containers that hold water, or even clogged gutters. Adding a small quantity of dish soap to fire barrels and other objects holding stagnant water can effectively deter the development of larvae. Although camp staff regularly inspects for such conditions, you or your Troop may find additional undetected breeding areas; please notify the Camp Director or Ranger of such conditions so that they can be corrected.

Precautions

To reduce the risk of mosquito bites, health authorities recommend:

1. Minimizing outdoor activities between dusk and dawn.
2. Wearing long-sleeved shirts and long pants.





3. Using an insect repellent of proven effectiveness. Appropriate repellents are the ones that:
 - a. Are registered with the Environmental Protection Agency
 - b. Include as active ingredient one of the following: DEET, Picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus, Para-menthane-diol, or IR3535. (DEET should not be used on children under 2 months of age and oil of lemon eucalyptus should not be used on children under 3 years of age.)
4. For more information on prevention, go to the CDC website: http://www.cdc.gov/chikungunya/pdfs/fs_mosquito_bite_prevention_us.pdf



Rodents

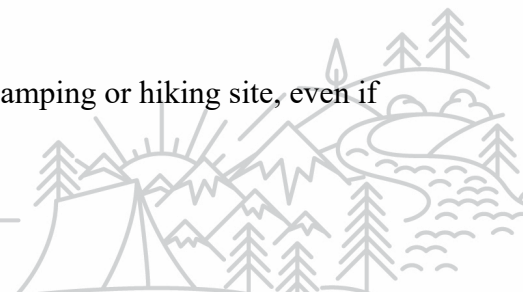
Rodents in the campsite often are the principle reason for why problems with other wildlife species arise. Small rodents, such as mice, voles, and chipmunks, are the primary prey of larger predators, especially snakes. When food is available and left unprotected in the campsite, it will attract small rodents, which in turn will attract the predators that feed on them. As a result, most incidents involving these larger predators can be traced back to the

presence of rodents. Therefore, to avoid these types of problems, it is essential to maintain a clean campsite and to properly store all food items and “smellables” in rodent-proof containers.

Rodents also are the primary vector for *hantavirus*, the agent responsible for hantavirus pulmonary syndrome (HPS). This disease is transmitted to individuals when they are exposed to the virus present in contaminated urine, feces, and saliva of mice and rats. Exposure occurs when a person inhales contaminated dust or other air-borne particles created when dried rodent feces and urine or the nests or den sites of these small mammals have been disturbed. This illness is not suspected to be spread from one person to another. For more information, see the Hantavirus section on page 14.

Precautions

- Avoid coming into contact with rodents and rodent burrows or disturbing dens or nests.
- Air out, then disinfect cabins or shelters before using them. Wet down areas to be cleaned before mopping or sweeping them.
- Do not pitch tents or place sleeping bags in areas in proximity to rodent droppings or burrows or near areas that may shelter rodents or provide food for them (e.g., garbage dumps or woodpiles).
- If possible, do not sleep on the bare ground. In shelters, use a cot with the sleeping surface at least 12 inches above the ground. Use tents with floors or a ground cloth if sleeping in the open air.
- Keep food in rodent-proof containers!
- Do not play with or handle any rodents that show up at the camping or hiking site, even if they appear friendly.





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- Report any rodent-infested areas to the Camp Ranger or Camp Director.
- Before hiking, treat pants, socks, shoe tops, arms, and legs with insect repellents to guard against fleabites.



Ticks

Ticks are small, hard-shelled arachnids that bury their mouthparts into the skin of warm-blooded animals to obtain a blood meal. Protect yourself whenever you are in tick-infested woodlands and fields by wearing long pants and a long-sleeved shirt. Button your collar and tuck the cuffs of your pants into your boots or socks. When traveling through brushy areas or fields that have not been mowed, inspect yourself frequently for the presence of ticks. When you return to camp, closely inspect all parts of your body, especially

the hairy parts, and immediately remove any ticks you find.

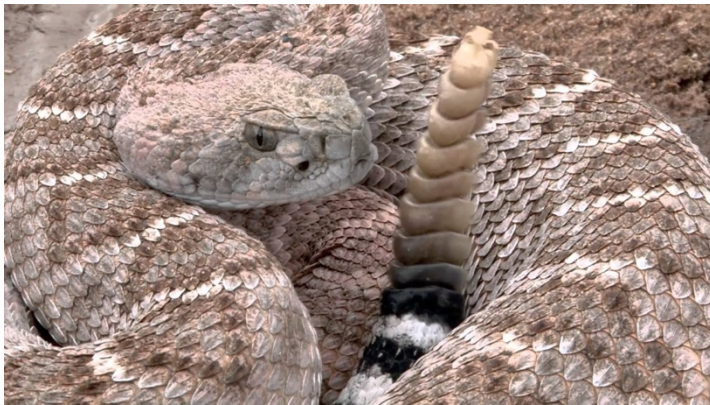
If a tick has attached itself, grasp it with tweezers close to the skin and gently pull until it comes loose. Don't twist or jerk the tick out, as that could leave its mouthparts in the skin and lead to potential infection. Do not squeeze the body of the tick with the tweezers as this may inject fluids from the tick into the bite. Wash the wound with soap and water and apply antiseptic. After dealing with a tick, thoroughly wash your hands. See a physician for any tick that has been attached to a human being for 48 hours or more or if you develop fever, chills, muscle aches, or headaches after removing a tick. Rocky Mountain Fever is the most common tick-borne disease in Arizona.

Warning! Tick Season!

Please use the following precautions:

- Wear light-colored clothing; this helps you see ticks before they can attach.
- Stay on trails and not in areas of high brush or tall weeds.
- If you must venture into brush or fields, wear long-sleeved shirts and full-length pants, preferably tucked into your socks.
- Spray a repellent containing 20 to 50 percent DEET around shirt and trouser cuffs.
- Check yourself and fellow campers frequently for the presence of ticks.





Snakes

Approximately 45,000 snakebites occur in the US each year, of which about 8,000 involve a venomous snake. Twelve to 15 people die a year from these bites, mostly the young, the elderly, or the infirmed. Two venomous snake species live in Arizona—Rattlesnakes and Coral Snakes. Neither of these species is particularly aggressive, unless provoked or

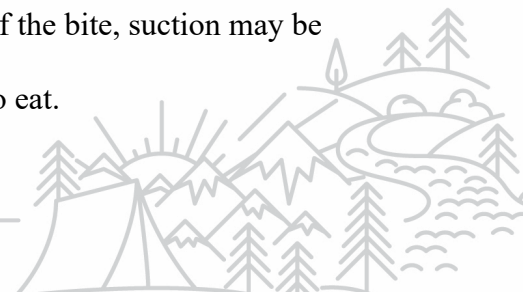
disturbed by surprise. Bites commonly occur on the hands or arms below the elbow (as a result from reaching out toward a snake or into an enclosed area before checking thoroughly) and on the legs below the knee (after a snake has been handled, antagonized, or inadvertently stepped upon). The amount of venom injected during a bite is variable; in fact, rattlesnakes sometimes deliver “dry-bites” where no venom is injected. However, you should treat any bite from a venomous snake as if transfer of venom has occurred and seek medical care as soon as possible.

Prevent Snake Bites

Watch closely where you step, never reach into concealed areas, shake out sleeping bags and clothes before use, and never handle snakes, even if you think they are dead. If you find a snake in your campsite, instruct a couple Scouts to watch the snake from a safe distance (~6-10 feet away) to monitor its movement while a pair of Scouts go to inform the Nature Staff or Senior Camp Staff who are trained to safely remove the reptile. **Never attempt to catch the snake yourself!**

Treatment for Snakebites

1. Take the patient to the Health Lodge immediately. Where possible, get a good description of snake involved to assist with its proper identification, but do not place others at further risk by trying to capture or kill the reptile. A patient often can be treated without positive identification based on other signs and symptoms.
2. If the snake is known to be non-venomous:
 - wash the wound thoroughly with soap and water
 - apply appropriate dressing
 - observe for and be prepared to treat for infection; recognize that snakebites often are accompanied by nausea and upset stomach.
3. If the snake is known to be venomous:
 - a. Don't panic—keep the patient still.
 - b. Splint the affected area.
 - c. Arrange for **IMMEDIATE** emergency transportation to hospital.
 - d. Do **NOT** apply tourniquet, ice, or make incisions over the wound.
 - e. If a Sawyer Extractor is available within 5 minutes of the bite, suction may be applied.
 - f. Do not administer medications or allow the patient to eat.
 - g. Treat all unknown snakes as venomous





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Coral Snakes

These snakes are relatively harmless due to their small size; however, they should not be handled! Coral snakes closely resemble non-venomous king snakes. Remember the poem:

Red then Black, friend of Jack
Red then Yellow, kill a fellow



Coyotes and Feral Dogs and Cats

Coyotes and feral dogs and cats live within the boundaries of camp. Users of and visitors to camp properties are not allowed to bring pets; therefore, it should be assumed that any dogs or cats found on the property are wild animals. As such, sightings of feral animals should be reported to a member of the camp staff immediately. Do not approach or attempt to attract such animals.

If bitten or scratched by one of these animals

If you are bitten or scratched, get a good description of the animal and its location at the time of the incident and head immediately to the Health Lodge for treatment (see “Rabies” in the following section).





Mountain Lion

Bio: These big, beautiful cats are found throughout Arizona and are most common in rocky or mountainous terrain. Shy and elusive; they are rarely seen. However, AZGFD estimates the state’s mountain lion population is robust and at 2,500 to 3,000 in Arizona. They are solitary creatures with the exception of females with kittens or breeding pairs.

Habits: Don’t expect a roar from this lion. They rarely make vocal noises, unless during

breeding season or when threatened. Kittens stay with mom for about 18 months. A mountain lion can live up to 13 years in the wild, but most average less than six years. True athletes, these cats can jump 20 feet vertically and 40 feet horizontally in a single leap. Deer is a staple in their diet, but they also prey on javelina, bighorn sheep, elk, small mammals, and occasionally livestock and pets. They are active during dusk and dawn.

Safety tips: Though mountain lions are reclusive and shy, they are predators and capable of seriously injuring or killing humans and pets. There are a few simple guidelines for dealing with big cats:

- Don’t run. Running may trigger a cougar’s instinct to chase and attack.
- Back away slowly, maintaining eye contact, being careful not to trip.
- Stand tall and spread your arms out to make yourself look big.
- Speak calmly but loudly. Be sure to keep any children close to you.
- Fight back if attacked, using sticks, stones, or kicking and punching. Cougars can be driven off with resistance.

For more information, see “Living with Mountain Lions”

https://www.azgfd.com/PortalImages/files/wildlife/livingwith/Living_with_MtnLions_final.pdf





Bobcats

Bio: Bobcats are common throughout the state at all elevations. But they especially love rimrock and chaparral areas, and more rural areas where food is readily available. These cats are typically seen alone, but groups may consist of mating pairs, siblings, or mothers with kittens. Bobcats are most active around sunset and

sunrise. A bobcat will defend a territory of one to 12 square miles. Larger than the house cat, they weight between 15 and 35 pounds.

Habits: These short-tailed cats mate from February to March. Moms have an average litter of two to three kittens, usually born from April to early June. Kittens stay with their mother for about seven to 12 months, and will live to be 10 to 15 years-old. Bobcats are carnivorous and generally feed on small mammals and birds (includes domestic birds and rabbits). They will also eat lizards, snakes, and small pets. These cats can jump as high as 12 feet.

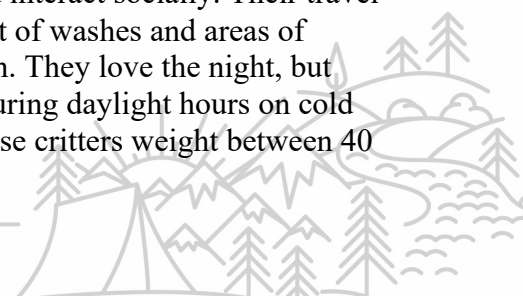
Safety Tips: A bobcat will rarely attack a person, but if it does, it will have symptoms of rabies. Please report all encounters to the Camp Ranger. There are a few simple guidelines for dealing with bobcats:

- Never approach it. Keep your distance.
- Don't run. Running may provoke the bobcat into instinctively pursuing you.
- Back away slowly, maintaining eye contact, being careful not to trip.
- Speak calmly but loudly. Be sure to keep any children close to you.
- If you have water, throw or spray it on the bobcat. Cats dislike water.
- Fight back if attacked, using sticks, stones, or kicking and punching.



Javelina

Bio: Not some pig; this animal is a member the peccary family—a group of hoofed mammals originating from South America. They form herds of two to more than 20 animals and rely on each other to defend territory, protect against predators, regulate temperature and interact socially. Their travel corridors consist of washes and areas of dense vegetation. They love the night, but will be active during daylight hours on cold days. These dense critters weight between 40





and 60 pounds. Javelina emit a skunky odor from a scent gland located on their backs to identify animals from different herds.

Safety tips: Javelina occasionally bite humans, but most incidents are associated with people providing them with food or threatening young. Defensive behavior includes charging, teeth clacking, or a barking, growling sound.

- Never approach it. Keep your distance.
- Make lots of noise. Be sure to keep any children close to you.
- If you have water, throw, or spray it on the Javelina.
- Fight back if attacked, using sticks, stones, or kicking and punching.



Arizona Centipede

There two types of centipedes that inhabit Arizona, primarily in the desert regions. The most common is the desert centipede and the other is the "Giant Arizona Centipede" which can reach a length of up to 8 inches. It is a reddish color with a blackish head. Both varieties have a set of claws at each end which is used to penetrate the skin while injecting venom. Though painful, the "pinches"

are rarely fatal. Unless the person is experiencing a severe allergic reaction, they will not require treatment for a centipede bite. Anti-itch and pain-relieving medications can help soothe a person's symptoms.



Scorpion

All scorpions are venomous to varying degrees. Scorpions sting with a barb at the end of its tail to inject venom. There are many species of scorpions located primarily in the desert regions of Arizona. With most varieties, the painful sting is not much more than that of a bee sting. The only type of scorpion in Arizona considered to be a serious threat is the "Bark Scorpion" which also happens to be the smallest of the species. Although recorded deaths from its sting are extremely rare, its sting is

considered serious. If stung, seek emergency treatment.

Safety Tips: Inspect shoes, clothing, and sleeping bags before using.





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Gila Monster

The Gila Monster is the only venomous lizard in the USA. It is also the largest lizard in the country. Reaching a length of up to 2 feet weighing a maximum of 5 pounds it is quite colorful. The Gila has a prominent black body with patterns of bright orange, yellow and pink. They are naturally lethargic and spend more than 95% of their lives in underground burrows. Consider yourself lucky if you see one of these beautiful animals. They are rarely seen and considered a threatened species. Bites from Gila monsters are very uncommon. Its venom is

fairly mild, yet can be very painful requiring medical treatment. Unlike rattlesnakes that inject venom, a Gila Monster latches on to victims and chew to create open wounds. Neurotoxins are emitted through grooves within their teeth.



Spiders

Black widows—The species found in Arizona are a very shiny black color with a pronounced bright red "hour glass" shaped marking on its underbelly. The widow has a plump, round abdomen attached directly to its head. Most often black widows nest outside in dark, moist places like woodpiles, rock piles, wall crevices, bushes and piles of debris. In colder weather they tend to move to indoor places like sheds, garages and even inside homes.

Never attempt to touch the widow. If you are working in its habitat, always wear heavy gloves to protect against bites. The venom attacks the nervous system and typically produces muscle aches, nausea and sometimes paralysis of the diaphragm which can create breathing difficulty. Although most bites do not cause serious damage it is wise to seek medical attention, particularly when affecting young children, the elderly and those with compromised immune systems.





Brown recluse—Often referred to as the "Arizona Brown Recluse" or "Desert Recluse". Colors can range from dark brown to sandy brown with all varieties identifiable by a darker brown violin-shaped marking on their backs.

The Brown Recluse Spider is not aggressive towards people and prefers to run rather than bite. They are however very venomous with a bite that can cause some serious disfiguring necrotic wounds that destroy tissue. Although serious injury has been greatly exaggerated, their bite can be of concern, particularly with infants and those with challenged

immune systems. Most bites happen when the recluse is trapped between skin and clothing or bed linens. This why you should never store clothing items in cardboard boxes under your bed.



Arizona Desert Tarantula—These spiders can appear very frightening but they only have very mild venomous barbed hairs on their abdomens. They "cast" those hairs only when threatened as a defensive mechanism. There is no reason to fear tarantulas. Just don't bother them when discovered in the wild.

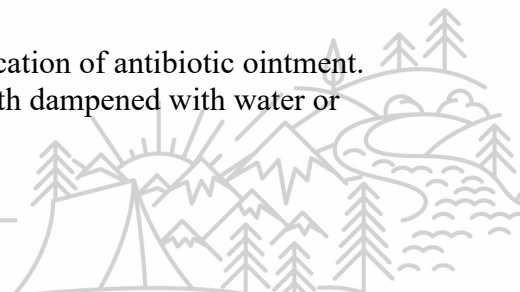
The tarantula is a nocturnal hunter. They feed upon grasshoppers, scorpions, smaller spiders, little lizards and arthropods. Their enemies and predators include larger lizards, snakes, birds and large animals like foxes and coyotes. Although the venom of the tarantula is relatively weak, it is strong enough to kill its typical prey. Like most spiders, the tarantula has no teeth. Their venom not only kills its prey, it serves the purpose of digesting by liquefying its prey. Since it cannot chew, it sucks-up its liquefied meal.

While most spider bites result in minor injuries, those from certain species can pose a risk. Seek immediate medical attention if:

1. You've been bitten by a potentially dangerous spider, such as a black widow or a brown recluse.
2. Uncertainty exists regarding whether the bite was from a hazardous spider.
3. Severe pain, stomach cramping, or breathing or swallowing difficulties arise.

To care for a spider bite:

1. Cleanse the wound with mild soap and water, followed by the application of antibiotic ointment.
2. Apply a cool cloth over the bite for 15 minutes, utilizing a clean cloth dampened with water or filled with ice to alleviate pain and swelling.





3. Elevate the affected area if possible.
4. Use a nonprescription pain reliever as required.
5. If itching occurs, consider an antihistamine such as diphenhydramine or cetirizine. Alternatively, try calamine lotion or a steroid cream.

Diseases Associated With Wildlife

Wild animals are susceptible to various infectious and parasitic organisms capable of causing disease. They also can transmit some of the diseases they may harbor to humans, especially where direct contact between an individual and a wild animal has occurred.

General Precautions

- Do not feed wild animals or encourage them to visit your campsite.
- Keep a clean campsite.
- Do not approach *any* wild animal.
- Do not approach or handle any wild animal that appears sick or is acting in an abnormal manner, even if it shows no fear of your approach.
- Stay away from dead animals.
- If you have had direct contact with a wild animal, wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water or a sanitizing gel, especially before eating, drinking, or touching the hands of another person.
- Do not touch or disturb animal scat.
- If you become sick shortly after being in contact with a wild animal, notify your Scouting leader and/or camp physician and provide details of the encounter; if you already have returned home before developing symptoms, tell your parents and ask to see your doctor.

Tick-borne Diseases

Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever

Here in the mid-Atlantic region, Rocky Mountain spotted fever is a seasonal disease (April through September) transmitted to campers and hikers who are exposed to the bite of infected ticks, most commonly the American dog tick (*Dermacentor variabilis*) or the brown dog tick (*Rhipicephalus sanguineus*). Although first recognized in the Rocky Mountain region, the disease now is found in nearly all states; Virginia accounts for a large percentage of reported cases.

Early symptoms of this disease include headache, chills, and fever. A rash appears on the extremities about the third day; initially localized on the wrists, hands, and ankles, the rash then spreads to other parts of the body. If the disease is diagnosed early, Rocky Mountain spotted fever can be treated effectively using a tetracycline antibiotic.

Lyme Disease (very uncommon in AZ)





The black-legged tick (*Ixodes scapularis*; also known as the deer tick) is responsible for the spread of Lyme disease. This tick is very small, often no larger than a sesame seed in its nymphal stage of growth. Although deer ticks can be encountered nearly year-long, they are most active during the summer months.

In most cases, infected individuals often will display a bull's-eye rash around the location of the initial bite; not all people experience this symptom, though. When present, the rash or area of inflammation expands in size over the next several days. Typically, the patient begins to develop flu-like symptoms (fever, headache, muscle and joint aches, fatigue) in the days or weeks following the appearance of the rash. If the tick is removed from the body within 24 hours, the chance of the tick transmitting Lyme disease is reduced. If left untreated, Lyme disease can cause debilitating and serious health issues.

Zika Virus (No confirmed cases in AZ)

If a person is bitten by a mosquito infected with Zika, they usually develop symptoms within 2–7 days after the bite. However, only about 1 in every 5 people infected will develop any signs or symptoms. People that do have symptoms can experience rash, fever, joint pain, and red eyes (conjunctivitis).

Precautions to Avoid Exposure to Ticks

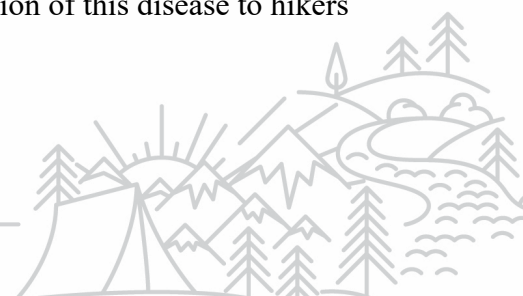
The best way to avoid tick-transmitted diseases is to avoid tick-infested areas, especially in the summer. Most ticks are found in brushy wooded areas and weedy grasslands. If you can not avoid these areas:

- Wear light-colored clothing so can be seen easily.
- Tuck pants legs into socks or boots.
- Tuck shirt into pants.
- Walk in the center of trails to avoid grass and brush.
- Inspect your body often and thoroughly.

Other Diseases Transmitted by Wildlife

Tularemia

Tularemia can be contracted from direct contact with an infected animal, from handling or eating insufficiently cooked meat (usually rabbit), through the bite of an infected tick or fly, or from drinking contaminated water. The common name for this disease, rabbit fever, arose from a history of transmission of the disease from infected rabbits, primarily cottontails and jackrabbits, to humans. Rabbits with tularemia behave oddly, run slowly, are unable to raise their heads, and usually can be captured easily. Rodents, such as beavers, muskrats, and voles, also are susceptible to tularemia. The bite of an infected tick represents the most common mode of transmission of this disease to hikers and campers.





Symptoms appear between 2 and 10 days after exposure. Because there are multiple forms of this disease, symptoms will vary with the particular strain. The most common symptoms include an open ulcer at the exposure site, swollen glands, and, if the bacteria were ingested, throat infection.

Rabies

Rabies is a viral disease that affects the central nervous system. All mammals are susceptible to rabies infection, although some species (e.g., opossum) display a much lower incidence of infection than do others. Raccoons, skunks, foxes, and bats are the principle rabies-vector species here in the East and, among these species; the raccoon is responsible for most transmissions of the disease. Currently infected animals represent the reservoir from which other infections occur. The rabies virus, contained in the saliva of an infected animal, is transmitted to the victim through a bite, a scratch, or contact with a mucous membrane or open cut, abrasion, or sore.

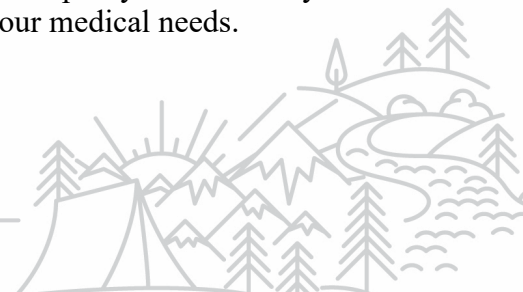
The signs that an animal is rabid vary depending on the animal and the stage of the disease. Any mammal that is wandering aimlessly without fear of dogs or humans should be suspect. Mammals that typically are nocturnal and are observed displaying aggressive behavior during daylight hours to dogs, cats, humans, or even inanimate objects are of special concern. Bats often show little outward signs of infection until late in the disease's incubation. Among farm animals, cattle often are exposed to and can become infected with rabies. When infected, cattle become unstable on their feet, bellow, yawn, or drool excessively. Because the disease slowly closes the throat passageway, infected animals may appear to have a foreign object in the throat and typically will refrain from drinking; it is from this symptom that rabies also has come to be known as "hydrophobia" (i.e., fear of water).

Any bite from an animal should be cleansed immediately and thoroughly and then examined by a physician. The incubation period for rabies varies from 10 days to several months, depending on the size and location of the wound. Rabies exposure to the head and neck likely will display a shorter incubation period than exposure sites on the extremities, due to the closer proximity to the brain.

Rabies vaccines are available for and should be administered to certain animals (dogs, cats, ferrets, cattle) regularly to help prevent the spread of this disease. Individuals who have frequent contact with animals (e.g., veterinarians, biologists) also should receive the human vaccine as a precaution against infection.

If you are bitten or scratched by any wild animal while at camp, get a good description of the animal involved in the exposure incident to help the medical staff determine the appropriate course of action to take. Wash the wound and surrounding surface area thoroughly with soap and water, detergent and water, 43-70% ethanol, quaternary ammonia, or tincture of iodine. Immediately after cleansing the wound, proceed to the Health Lodge and discuss further treatment with the Camp Physician. Notify the Camp Ranger about the encounter as soon as possible after taking care of your medical needs.

Hantavirus





Hantavirus is serious and potentially deadly viral disease that rodents (primarily mice and rats) can transmit to humans through their saliva, urine, and feces and from indirect contact with the nests or den sites of these rodents. Transmission typically occurs from inhaling the virus once it has been aerosolized (disturbed and suspended in the air column), often while cleaning up the mess created by an infestation of rodents. Infection also can occur from the bite of an infected rodent or from touching a surface contaminated by infected animals and then making contact with the nose, mouth, or eyes.

Symptoms of Hantavirus include fatigue, fever, and muscle aches, especially in the large muscle groups (legs, hips, back, and shoulders). Headaches, dizziness, chills, and abdominal problems (nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain) may accompany the primary symptoms, but may not be present in all cases. In as little as 4 to 10 days after the initial exposure, the patient will display excessive coughing and shortness of breath as the lungs progressively fill with fluid.

There is no specific treatment, cure, or vaccine available for Hantavirus. Therefore, early detection or recognition of the potential exposure to Hantavirus is important. Immediate and early medical attention is necessary if the patient is to successfully fight this disease.

Precautions for dealing with Hantavirus: see “Rodents” section (page 8).

West Nile Virus

West Nile Virus (WNV) is a potentially serious, seasonal (late-spring, summer, and early-fall) illness spread by infected mosquitoes. Mosquitoes acquire the virus after having bitten an infected bird, and then transmit the virus to other animals or humans during a subsequent bite.

Symptoms are variable and diverse, depending upon the health condition and age of the patient. Some people will display no outward symptoms at all whereas others, especially those with compromised immune systems, may show multiple indicators. Common symptoms include fever, headache, body aches, nausea, vomiting, swollen lymph glands, or a skin rash on the chest, stomach, and back. Severe cases may display high fever, headache, neck stiffness, stupor, disorientation, coma, tremors, convulsions, muscle weakness, vision loss, numbness, and paralysis.

There is no specific treatment for WNV infection. In mild cases, people generally recover from the fever and aches on their own after about a week. In more severe cases, hospitalization likely will be necessary to provide the level of treatment required.

The best way to prevent exposure to WNV is avoid exposure to mosquito bites and to eliminate sites where mosquitoes can breed. For specific precautions on limiting exposure to mosquito bites, see the “Mosquitoes at Camp” section (page 7).

Source: The Centers for Disease Control (<http://www.cdc.gov>)

