



PHOTOGRAPHING WILDLIFE

The consequences of approaching or disturbing wildlife can be serious. You are responsible for your own safety as well as the safety of wildlife.

Safety Tips from the Be Bear Aware Campaign

Carry Bear Spray readily accessible on your waist, hip, or shoulder.

When Buying Bear Spray look for 7+ seconds of spray duration and a spray distance of at least 30+ feet.

Use binoculars, spotting scopes, and telephoto lenses to view and photograph wildlife. This reduces stress on the animals.

Keep a distance of at least 100 yards away from bears and 25 yards away from bison, moose, elk, and deer.

View and photograph from established observation areas or the trail when hiking. If an animal approaches, back away in order to maintain a safe distance and ready your bear spray in the event the animal charges.

Remain alert to potential danger while viewing or taking pictures. Be extra cautious when photographing at dawn and dusk. Wild animals, such as bears, are more active at these times of day.

Avoid direct eye contact with bears, even through a lens, because it may be interpreted as a challenge or threat.

Stay away from newborn or young animals, nests, and dens for your safety and theirs.

Don't make sudden movements or loud noises around wild animals.

Never sneak up on or surprise an animal, especially a bear.

Never surround, crowd, chase, or follow a wild animal. It may respond by charging.

Never try to get an animal to move to a different location to perfect your photo opportunity.



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[How to Avoid Encounters](#)

[Proper Food Storage](#)

[Bear Identification](#)

[What to do in an Encounter](#)

[How to Deploy Bear Spray](#)

BE BEAR AWARE CAMPAIGN

Bear Spray

The Be Bear Aware Campaign promotes the carrying and proper use of a quality bear spray when hiking, biking, fishing, camping, and hunting in bear country. We recommend you purchase bear spray that has a spray duration of at least 7+ seconds and has a spray distance of at least 30+ feet. Meeting or exceeding this standard gives you extra protection for more than one charge, multiple bears, wind, rain, cold, erratic spraying, or spraying over top of the bear.

Be patient and practice low-impact photography. It takes time to capture wildlife on film, especially in wildlands.

Consider photographing zoo and other captive animals to capture that perfect shot.

Watch other people in the area. Are they putting you in danger by crowding wildlife?



What If You Encounter a Bear?



If you see, or suspect, a bear is in the area, stop and get your bear spray ready for quick use.

If the bear is in the distance and **does not** notice you, take a route that detours around the bear and remain cautious.

If the bear is in the distance and **does** notice you, stop, talk to the bear in a monotone, non-threatening voice and assess the situation. Can you back away and take a detour? Is the bear approaching you? Does it appear agitated, aggressive, or ready to charge?



What If You are Charged by a Bear?

When the charging bear is about **60 feet away**, spray slightly downward to a point about 30 feet in front of you. The bear spray will come out with a whooshing sound and orange coloring, this sometimes is enough to deter the bear from its charge.

When the bear charges from **30 feet**, spontaneously spray downward toward the front of the bear. The bear spray will make a cone-shaped cloud that expands outward and upward. DO NOT AIM, just spray and keep spraying until the bear diverts its charge.

If the charge is from **15 feet**, spray if you are prepared. If contact is inevitable, drop and lie flat on your stomach and clasp hands behind your neck. If you can, spray the area both you and the bear are in. **It is never too late to use bear spray.**