



SAFE WORK PRACTICE

TITLE	Working with Wildlife
GENERAL	Protecting workers from risks of working rurally with wildlife
APPLICATION	All departments
PROTECTIVE MECHANISMS	Local Regulations PPE Working with equipment
SELECTION AND USE	Manitoba Agriculture and Resources Development - Fish and wildlife dept.
SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITY	To facilitate and/or provide proper instruction to their workers on protection requirements and training Enforcement Compliance
WORKER RESPONSIBILITY	<p>Why do we have conflicts?</p> <p>There will always be some level of conflict between people and wildlife because humans share land, air and water resources with other species. However, there are three major factors that can significantly increase the risk of wildlife-human conflict by bringing people and wildlife into closer physical proximity to one another. These factors are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Attractants: Attractants include things that wild animals may consider to be potential food, cover, or water sources. Wildlife may be drawn into an area of human development/activity due to the presence of attractants. 2. Habituation: A habituated animal has learned through repeated positive or neutral encounters with people that there is little reason to fear people. These animals grow tolerant to people being in closer proximity to them, and don't avoid people like normal wild animals. 3. Food-conditioning: Wild animals become food-conditioned when they are attracted to human foods or garbage because previous food rewards have given them positive reinforcement for this behaviour. These animals may actively seek out human foods. <p>People can take action to reduce attractants, habituation and food-conditioning and thereby reduce the risk of conflicts with wildlife.</p>

**What actions can people take to reduce the risk of conflict?**

Wildlife Smart actions to reduce the risk of wildlife conflict primarily involve securing attractants, preventing wildlife from being surprised at close range, or becoming habituated or food-conditioned, as well as increasing knowledge and awareness about coexisting with wildlife. Here are some general Wildlife Smart tips:

- Be aware that wild animals are found throughout Manitoba, and a dangerous encounter can happen both near and far from human development and human activity.
- Be aware that any wild animal may attack if it senses a threat to itself, its young, or its food source; predatory animals may consider a person, pet, or livestock to be prey.
- Never feed or approach a wild animal; be aware that Manitoba regulations prohibit the feeding of wildlife along provincial roads and highways, and in other specified areas of the province.
- When walking, be aware of your surroundings, watch for signs that wild animals may be nearby, and carry deterrents such as a walking stick and noise-maker.
- Teach children how to recognize wildlife and how to respond appropriately in an encounter. From a young age, children should learn not to approach an animal unless it is on a leash and the owner says it is okay to do so.
- In wilderness or other high-risk areas, hike in a group, make noise, carry bear deterrent spray where it's easily accessible and know how to use it.
- Keep pets on a leash and under control; bring pets indoors at night, and don't leave them outside unattended during the daytime.
- Vaccinate pets and frequently clean up pet waste from your yard.
- Secure all attractants so that wild animals can't access human food, garbage, pet/livestock food, or composted food scraps.
- Feeding birds can attract a wide variety of wildlife. During the summer, use a birdbath to attract birds. In winter (December to March), it is recommended that feeders should not hang below two meters, and that any spilled seed be cleaned up frequently.
- Thoroughly clean barbecues after every use; don't forget the grease trap.
- Remove all fruit from your yard as it ripens.
- Reduce cover and denning opportunities in your yard by removing any debris piles, trimming overgrown areas, removing tree branches overhanging your house, and sealing entry to your attic, chimney and underneath your shed and deck.
- Cover sandboxes when they're not in use.
- Visit the [Publications and Links](#) webpage to access fact sheets, posters, booklets and other Wildlife Smart information materials.



If you encounter wildlife that you believe could pose a risk to your safety:

- Stop, remain calm and assess the situation.
- If you are near a building or vehicle, get inside.
- Pick up small children or pets; sudden movement or noise from them may attract the attention of the wild animal.
- If you have a backpack on, keep it on; if you are attacked it may help to protect you.
- If the animal is in a tree, leave it alone and leave the area; when it feels safe it will climb down.
- Ensure the animal has an escape route; if you have cornered an animal, slowly move so that it is able to leave.
- Never run, as this may provoke a chase and an attack.
- Do not try to distract the animal with food as this will encourage the animal to continue approaching people and increase risk for other people it may encounter.

If the wildlife is unaware of you:

- Move away quietly when the animal is not looking toward you.
- Keep your eye on the animal as you leave in case its behaviour changes, but do not make direct eye contact.
- Do not crouch down.

If the wildlife is aware of you:

- Respond appropriately based on the animal species and its behaviour; more information is available on the [Publications and Links](#) webpage.