

Be Wildlife Smart When Working in the Woods



Guidelines for Timber, Power, Agriculture, Fire Prevention and Natural Resource Workers

If you work in the woods in Oregon, you work in wildlife habitat. The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife has prepared these guidelines to help you stay safe while keeping Oregon's animals healthy and where they belong – in the wild.



Don't Feed the Animals

Bears, squirrels, raccoons and other species are opportunistic feeders. If they see or smell food, they will try to get to it. Once habituated to humans and human food, animals can become safety problems and often must be destroyed. This is especially true for bears. To protect both yourself and Oregon's wildlife:

- Never feed a wild animal.
- Store all food and garbage in bear-proof containers and pack it out.
- Don't bury garbage; bears will dig it up.
- Keep scented items – suntan lotion, soap and toiletries – in bear-proof containers or in the trunk of a vehicle.

Oregon is Black Bear Country

In most cases, a bear will avoid human contact and attacks are uncommon. However, it is never safe to approach a bear.

- Make noise when walking through the woods so as not to surprise a bear.
- Leave dogs at home. In the forest, keep them in a car or truck, or leash them. A loose dog may lead a bear back to you.
- If you see bear cubs, leave the area.
- Never pick up a bear cub – its mother has left it there and will return.

If you encounter a bear:

- Give any bear you see a way to escape.

- Stay calm. Do not run or make sudden movements.
- Back away slowly.
- Avoid direct eye contact with the bear.
- If a bear stands on its hind legs, it is trying to detect scents. It is not necessarily behaving aggressively.
- In the unlikely event you are attacked, fight back. Shout, be aggressive, and use rocks, sticks and tools to fend off an attack.
- Report the incident immediately to the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife or the Oregon State Police.





Cougars and Other Carnivores

Mountain lions, also called cougars, are native to Oregon. Cougars are solitary animals not often seen. Mainly active at dawn and dusk, cougars feed on deer and elk, but also eat raccoons and other small mammals.

To avoid encounters with cougars:

- Manage food and garbage safely.
- Be aware of your surroundings, particularly when hiking in dense cover or when sitting quietly.
- Do not leave a dog tied outside; it may attract a cougar.
- Stay in a group.

In the unlikely event you come face to face with a cougar:

- Stop, stand tall and do not run.
- Face the cougar and talk to it while slowly backing away.
- Always leave the animal an escape route.

- Try to appear larger than the cougar by getting above it. Raise your arms.
- Do not take your eyes off the animal or turn your back. Do not crouch down or try to hide.
- If the cougar becomes aggressive, shout, wave your arms and throw tools or rocks. You are trying to convince the cougar that you are a potential danger. Usually if you are aggressive enough, a cougar will flee.
- If the cougar attacks, fight back aggressively.

In addition to black bears and cougars, the other carnivores in Oregon are coyotes. Gray wolves may appear in Oregon during the next few years as they disperse from Idaho, where they were reintroduced in the 1990s. While coyote and wolf attacks on humans are rare, use caution, manage food and garbage safely, and leave dogs at home or keep them leashed and near you at all times.

For more information, visit MyODFW.com or call a local ODFW office. (<https://myodfw.com/contact-us>)



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