



What to do/not do when encountering wild animals in Utah

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SALT LAKE CITY — Many Utahns may be heading to the outdoors for camping and hiking during the Pioneer Day weekend. During these excursions, you may encounter some of Utah's wildlife. Here are some tips to help you and the animal avoid getting hurt.

Bears

Black bears are the only bears that live in Utah, according to the Division of Wildlife Resources. DWR [gave some tips](#) to help decrease encounters with black bears while camping.

- Dispose of trash in bear-proof dumpsters, if available
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- Wipe down picnic tables
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- Burn food off stoves or grills
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- Pitch tents away from trails in the backcountry
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- Always sleep inside your tent
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- Never approach or feed a bear

If you do encounter a black bear, you should do the following:

Bears

- **Stand your ground. Never back up, lie down or play dead. Stay calm and give the bear a chance to leave. Prepare to use bear spray or another deterrent.**
- **Don't run away or climb a tree. Black bears are excellent climbers and can run up to 35 mph so don't try to outclimb or outrun them — you can't.**
- **Know bear behavior. If a bear stands up, grunts, moans or makes other sounds, it's not being aggressive. These are the ways a bear gets a better look or smell and expresses its interest.**

Source: DWR

KSL-TV

Rattlesnakes

There are eight rattlesnake subspecies in Utah with the most common being the Great Basin rattlesnake, according to Division of Wildlife Resources native aquatic species coordinator Krissy Wilson. The [most likely area to encounter](#) a rattlesnake is on a rocky, talus slope.

Here's what to do if you do encounter a rattlesnake:

Rattlesnakes

- **Remain calm and do not panic or move suddenly.**
- **Stay at least 5 feet from the snake. Give the rattlesnake plenty of space.**
- **Do not try to kill the snake. Doing so is illegal and greatly increases the chance the snake will bite you.**
- **Alert people to the snake's location. Advise them to use caution and to respect the snake.**
- **Keep children and pets away from the snake.**

Source: DWR

KSL-TV

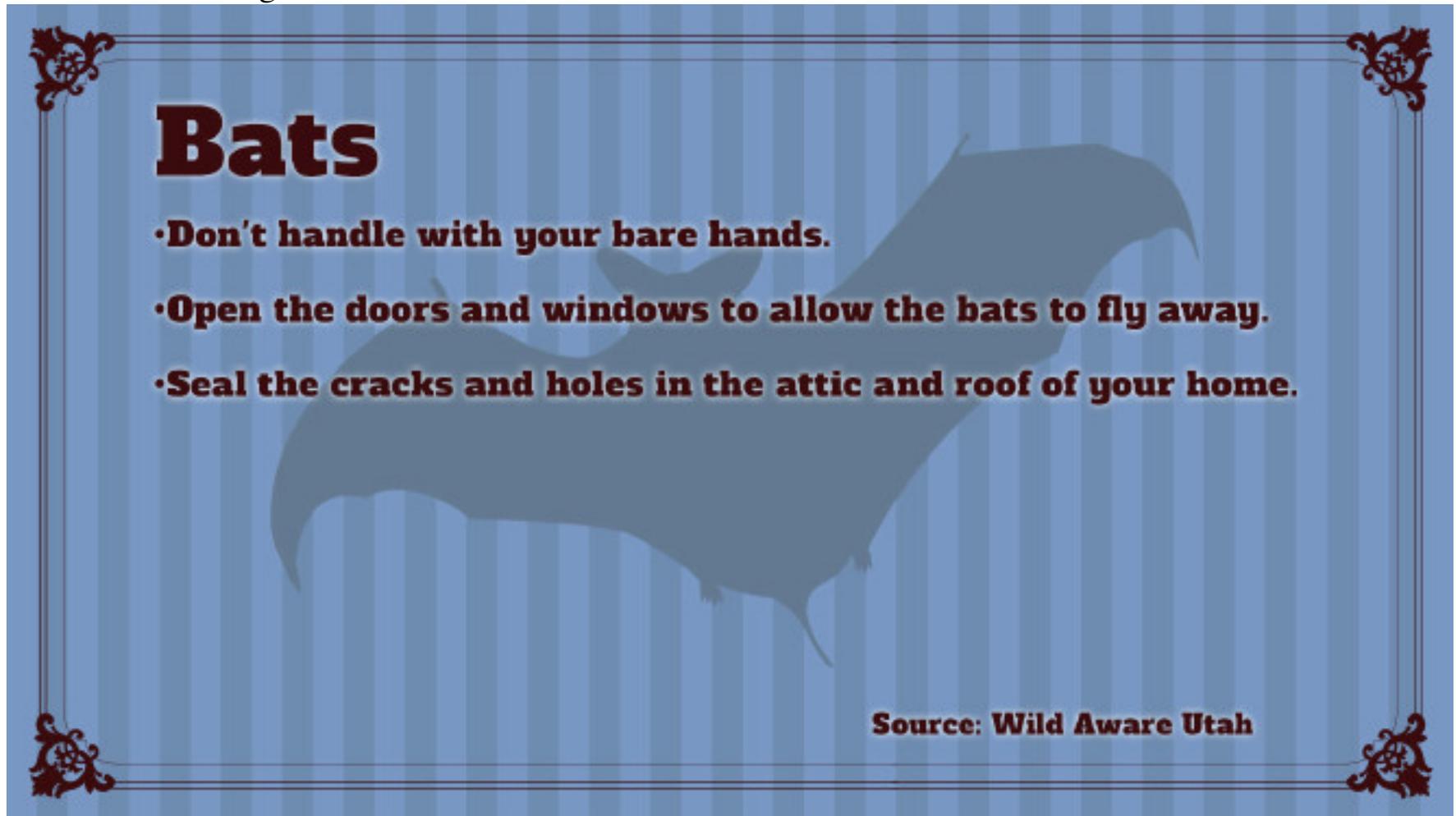
Click [here for tips](#) of what to do if you are bitten by the snake.

Bats

Utah is home to 18 species of bats, most of which live in Utah year-round and hibernate during the winter, according to Wild Aware Utah. Most bat-human conflicts occur when bats use buildings as dwellings, but bats rarely attack people. However, a small percentage of them carry diseases, like rabies.

Contrary to popular belief, bats do not try to tangle in people's hair, but they may appear to be diving at people because they are trying to regain flight speed and control, Wild Aware Utah said. Open the doors and windows to allow the bats to fly out of the room.

To avoid conflicts, people should consider sealing the cracks and holes in the attic and roofs of their homes. People could also consider installing a bat house near their property to provide bats an alternative roosting site from their home.



Bats

- **Don't handle with your bare hands.**
- **Open the doors and windows to allow the bats to fly away.**
- **Seal the cracks and holes in the attic and roof of your home.**

Source: Wild Aware Utah

The infographic features a light blue background with a large, semi-transparent silhouette of a bat in flight. The text is presented in a dark red, bold font. The entire graphic is framed by a decorative border with ornate corner pieces.

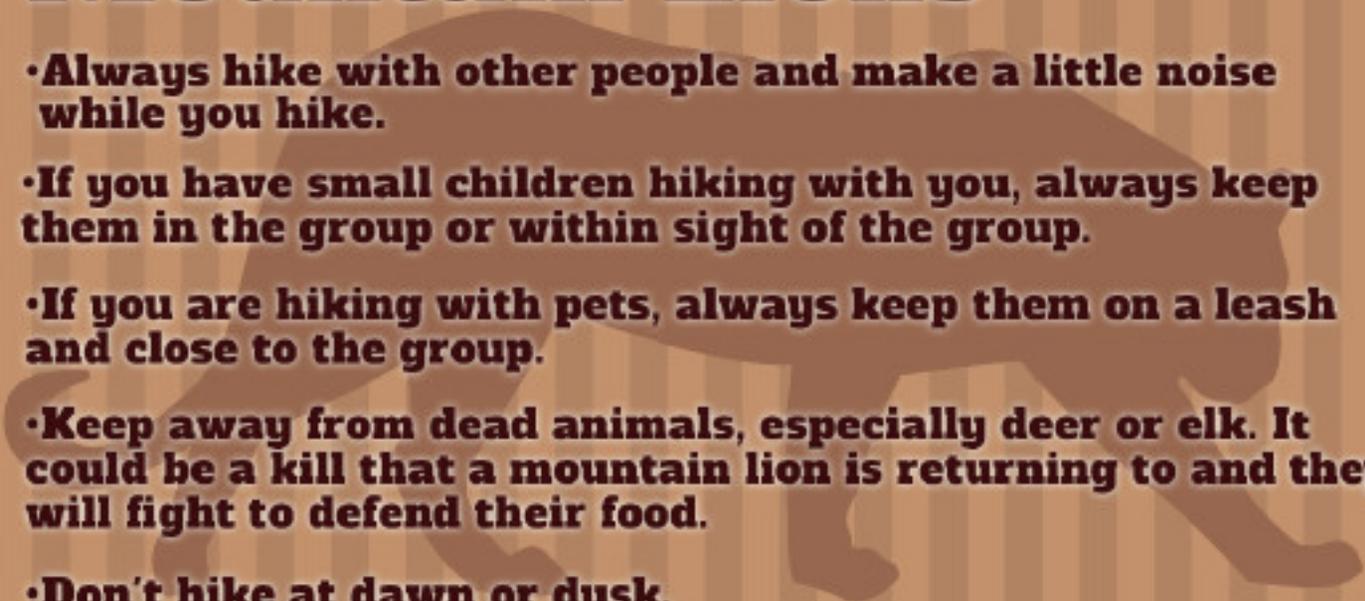
KSL-TV

Mountain lions

Mountain lions are active year-round and have extremely large territories, according to a Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest news release. They sometimes roam more than 20 miles a day in search of food and have been known to enter residential areas.

Follow these guidelines to decrease encounters with mountain lions and to stay safe if you do encounter one:

Mountain Lions



- **Always hike with other people and make a little noise while you hike.**
- **If you have small children hiking with you, always keep them in the group or within sight of the group.**
- **If you are hiking with pets, always keep them on a leash and close to the group.**
- **Keep away from dead animals, especially deer or elk. It could be a kill that a mountain lion is returning to and they will fight to defend their food.**
- **Don't hike at dawn or dusk.**

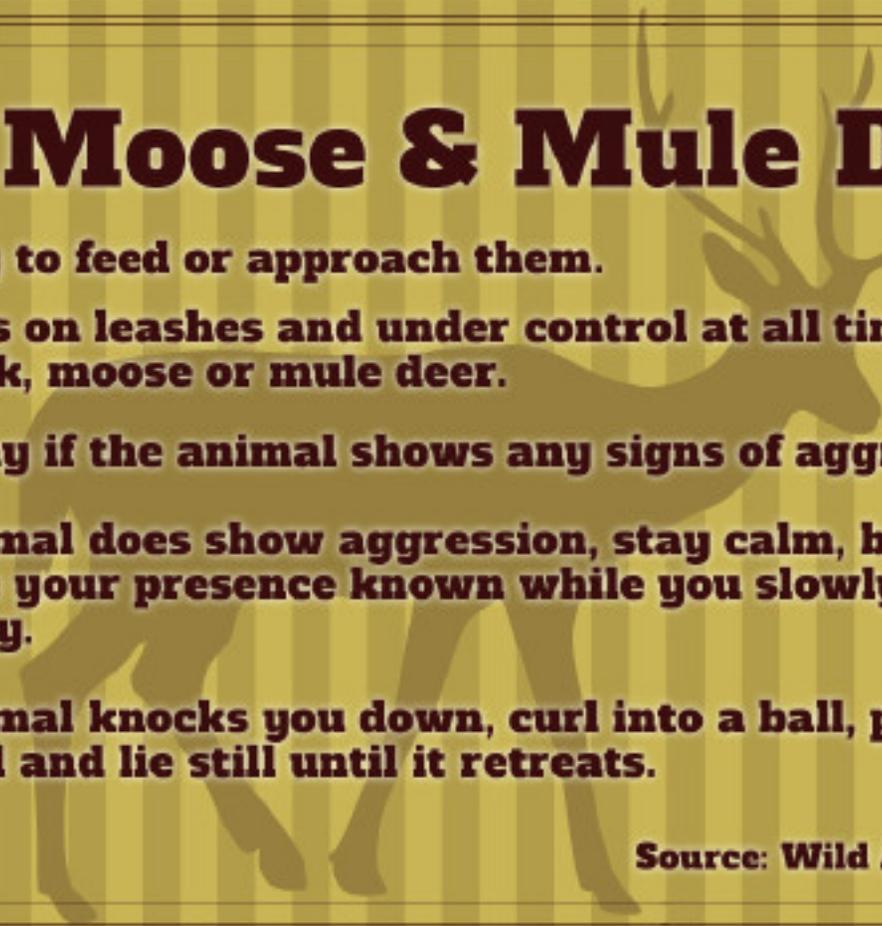
Source: Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest

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Elk, moose and mule deer

Moose are the largest member of the deer species in Utah and can run up to 35 mph, according to Wild Aware Utah. They can be found in the mountains of the northern and northeastern parts of the state. Along with elk and mule deer, moose can become aggressive. Here's what to do if you encounter any of Utah's three deer species:

Elk, Moose & Mule Deer



- **Never try to feed or approach them.**
- **Keep dogs on leashes and under control at all times around elk, moose or mule deer.**
- **Back away if the animal shows any signs of aggression.**
- **If the animal does show aggression, stay calm, but talk and make your presence known while you slowly back away.**
- **If the animal knocks you down, curl into a ball, protect your head and lie still until it retreats.**

Source: Wild Aware Utah