

## Wildlife Safety

4/1/2020

- Most wildlife avoid humans.
- Please be aware of your surroundings at all times.
- All wildlife crossing the trails have the right of way, please give them a respectful space.
- Do not feed wildlife under any circumstances. This will cause an animal to become acclimated to humans and dependent on us for food. The animal will learn to approach humans for food, potentially putting themselves and people in danger.
- If an animal does not run away from you, this does not mean that you can pet or capture this animal. Leave wildlife wild and do not try to touch them.
- If you encounter wildlife, remain calm and do not approach. Most wildlife become stressed and feel threatened when a human approaches.
- Distance yourself from an animal slowly and always keep an eye on that animal as you back away.
- If your movements cause the animal to react, then you are too close to them.
- Many animals, such as alligators, will defend their nest and young. Do not approach young or juvenile wildlife for any reason, the mother will protect her offspring.
- Do not purposefully disturb birds. Although chasing birds on the beach may seem fun, you are causing them to use valuable energy. Observe birds from a distance.
- If you are biking, please be aware of wildlife crossing the trail and give them the right of way.
- Avoid hiking at dawn or dusk when animals are most active.
- If you are camping or packing in a meal, make sure that all food is properly stored and not left behind. Leaving food unattended may entice wildlife to approach your campsite.
- Dogs should ALWAYS be leashed. An unleashed dog may unknowingly approach wildlife and cause that animal to defend itself. Your pet is your responsibility.
- Stay on designated paths and review trail signs for information.
- If you have an encounter with an animal that has left you injured, call 911 immediately.
- If you have found an injured animal, call the Park's Nature Center at (251) 948-7275. Do not try to capture or help this animal.