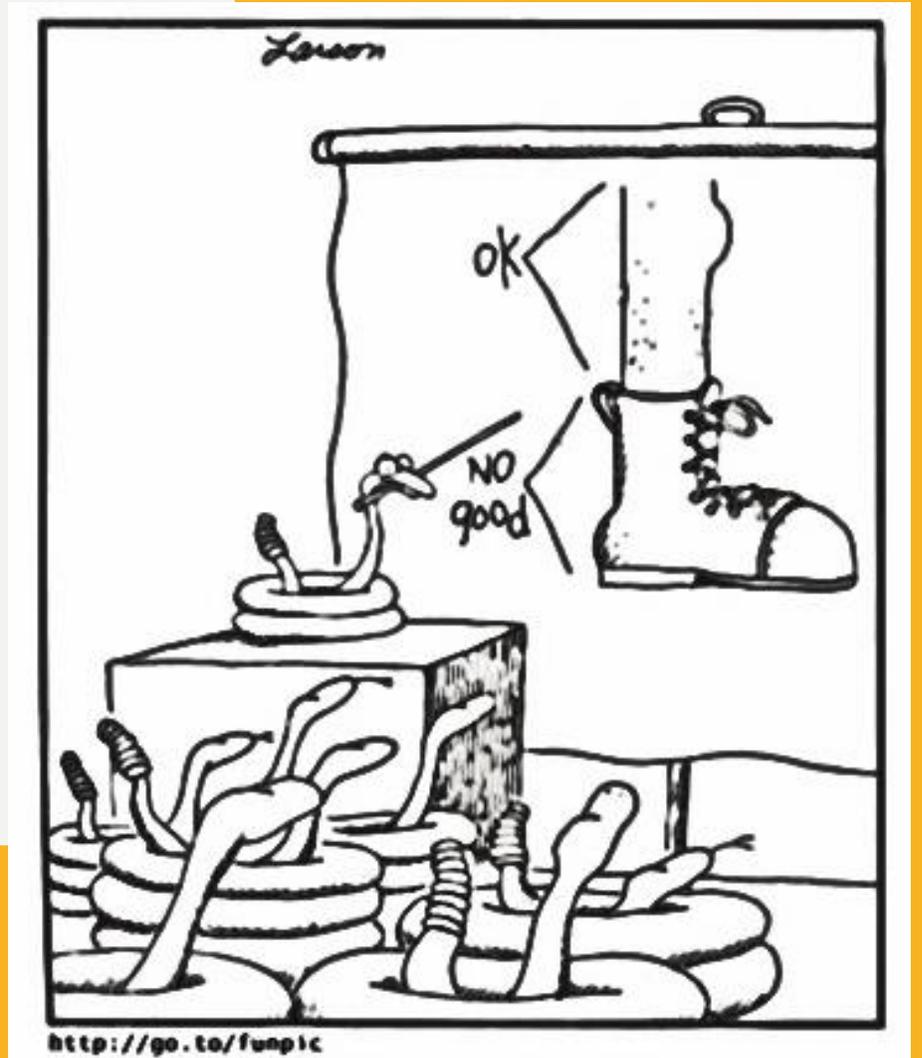


ANIMAL ENCOUNTERS AND RISKS

THINGS YOU
SHOULD KNOW
AND SHARE
WITH VISITORS
ABOUT
WILDLIFE IN
THE SANTA
CATALINAS...



- We all know that **Sabino Canyon and the surrounding area is a safe place to enjoy as long as we understand that it is being kept as wild as possible despite the heavy recreation by humans.**
- Visitors of course want to see wildlife – but many have the misconception that Sabino Canyon is a National Park or even a wildlife park and that we have some sort control of the animals here.

The following are things to keep in mind, what to do and what to advise visitors when wildlife is encountered.



Important to remember:

These are WILDLANDS in the Coronado National Forest and there is always an INHERENT RISK in wildlands.

- National Forest Service is in charge of the land; AZ Game & Fish deals with the animal life.
- This area is kept as wild as possible despite high usage with a policy of hands-off, non-intervention, and letting nature take its course, as long as there is no immediate danger to people.
- **HANDS OFF, LEAVE WILDLIFE ALONE!** There are many state and federal laws that protect a variety of species, some are on the Endangered Species List. Most birds and the fish in the creek are protected. Some hunting is allowed in the Catalinas for certain mammals and reptiles (major exception for Gila Monsters which are federally protected), but requires a license and special permits. However, there is NO HUNTING in the Sabino Canyon Recreation area.
- There will be wildlife sightings, and occasionally an encounter, and you need to know what to do or what to tell visitors. **Negative encounters are rare here.**

I. MOUNTAIN LIONS



There are *Mountain Lion brochures* in the Visitor Center that contain a lot of details, advice and phone numbers to call with sightings.

There are educational talks about mountain lions offered here at the VC, which you may want to attend for your Continuing Education.

I. MOUNTAIN LIONS (CONT'D)

There are FOUR levels of interaction with a mountain lion:

1. Sighting – visual observation of the animal itself, tracks, or scat.
2. Encounter – unexpected direct neutral meeting without incident.
3. Incident: an interaction in which a human must take action to make the lion back down or the lion exhibits aggressive or abnormal behavior, such as daylight activity, failure to yield or takes an unusual interest in humans.
4. Attack: human is chased, suffers bodily injury or worse (has not happened in Sabino Canyon)

I. MOUNTAIN LIONS (CONT'D.)

What you should do or advise visitors who encounter a lion:



1. **DO NOT TURN OR RUN AWAY – YOU WOULD BE ACTING LIKE A PREY ANIMAL.**
2. Take off sunglasses if you're wearing them so you can make eye contact – face the lion down.
3. If the lion approaches, try to appear larger by raising your arms and hands, hiking poles, waving a jacket, or throw things (water bottle, your pack) without bending down to pick anything up.
4. If you are really attacked, **FIGHT BACK!**
5. Of course, **call 911 if injuries occur.**

I. MOUNTAIN LIONS (CONT'D.)

Report any level encounter you PERSONALLY HAD to:

- AZ Game & Fish = **mandatory** 623-236-7201
and Josh Taiz, FS Biologist, 520- 403-8277
- Patrol Log = **mandatory**
- Visitor Center = **desirable**

Remember, a 1st hand report is advisable...please don't report encounters 2nd-hand (for someone else) – let the person who had the encounter make the report with their own details.

II. RATTLESNAKES & OTHER REPTILES

- The most common potentially dangerous animal encountered in the area is the **rattlesnake**, a pit viper with easily recognized and distinctive triangular head and nubby rattles on the tail (photos next slide).
- It can strike about $\frac{1}{2}$ or $\frac{2}{3}$ of its body length and does not necessarily coil or rattle before striking.
- Three most common types in the Catalinas are **Diamondback**, **Black-tailed**, and **Tiger** Rattlesnake (photos are available in the Sabino Canyon Naturalists Guide for you and to show visitors who may ask).

II. RATTLESNAKES & OTHER REPTILES

(CONT'D.)



Western
Diamondback



Black-tailed



Tiger

II. RATTLESNAKES & OTHER REPTILES

(CONT'D.)

Harmless gopher snakes are often mistaken for rattlesnakes but do not have the triangular-shaped head or rattles on the tail. They are of course to be left alone, as they are important to natural rodent control.



II. RATTLESNAKES & OTHER REPTILES

(CONT'D.)

Rattlesnake encounters

1. **BE ALERT** at all times, especially when entering shady areas or restrooms. A good reason to advise visitors/hikers to stay on designated trails is that snakes will more easily be seen. Also, it is important to look under large rocks or boulders before you approach or sit on them. Especially, small children should not be allowed to wander off-trail for their safety!
2. If you see a snake that is crawling across the trail or away from you, **leave it alone!**
3. If it is still or coiled, back away and if you're on a narrow trail, **do not try to 'wake it up' or push it away with a stick or pole.**
4. **It is important to inform or warn others if the snake is nearby.**
5. **ONLY IF** the rattlesnake is in an enclosed area like a restroom and shows no sign of leaving **call Josh Taiz**, FS Biologist, so that removal of the snake can be arranged.
6. If a visitor is trying to throw a rock at the snake or hit it with a stick, let them know that they are **NOT TO HARM ANY WILDLIFE** - not only would such actions make the animal defend itself, but the wildlife here is protected.

II. RATTLESNAKES & OTHER REPTILES

(CONT'D.)

If someone is **bitten by a rattlesnake, call 911** –
they must get to a hospital for antivenin.

You do NOT DO First Aid related to snakebites.

II. RATTLESNAKES & OTHER REPTILES

(CONT'D.)

- Another venomous snake found in Sabino Canyon is the **Coral Snake**. It is venomous but very small, about as big around as your smallest finger. It has bands of red and black separated by yellow. (“red & yellow kills a fellow”) The coral snake does not strike so a bite is unlikely due to its small mouth. **VENOMOUS - LEAVE IT ALONE.. →**
- The king snake is often confused with the coral snake because it has bright yellow, black and red bands as well (red & yellow not touching) but is **much larger** and **HARMLESS – LEAVE IT ALONE →**



II. RATTLESNAKES & OTHER REPTILES

(CONT'D.)

- **Gila Monsters** are the only venomous lizard in the U.S., and they are a **threatened** species, not threatening...they are not aggressive and do NOT chase people. They are slow moving and will generally move away from you.
- Gila Monsters do not have fangs – their venom comes from their gums so they have to clamp their mouth onto live prey and hold on until the venom can ooze out.
- Observe and enjoy watching it but **LEAVE IT ALONE.**



III. AFRICANIZED BEES

- ALL wild honeybees in the southern states are Africanized, which are aggressive hybrids of our much-needed European honeybees. The FS is currently developing a protocol to deal with bee issues; a bee swarm or basketball-sized clump of thousands of bees is not particularly dangerous – they are relocating to another nest site. When you come close to a actual nest however, bees aggressively defend it. They nest anywhere, like rock crevices and hollowed out logs. Warnings will be put up when there is a severe danger, especially for people who are allergic so they will know not to go to that area. **You may want to report any aggressive bee activity to the VC.**
- If you are chased or stung by a bee, **DO NOT SWAT AT IT** (it will give off a chemical signal that will attract other bees to attack). Run away as fast as you safely can and you will most likely outrun the bees. Cover your face and head, but make sure you can still SEE where you're going!
- If stung, **do NOT try to remove the stinger that may still be in your skin by squeezing with your fingers or tweezers** – use a straight-edge item (like a credit card) to scrape across the stinger to remove it from your skin. **People who are allergic to bee venom should seek emergency help if they are not already carrying an Epi pen.**

III. BEES (cont'd.)



SWARMING BEES...

are not generally dangerous - the hive is relocating. A swarm may contain hundreds to thousands of bees and can usually be heard before being seen.

IV. TICKS



← ADULT



← BLOOD-
ENGORGED
ADULT

Disease-carrying ticks are abundant during the rainy season in the grasslands of the Rincons between 4000'-6000'; they have most likely already migrated to the wet canyons and grasslands of the Catalinas.

PREVENTION:

- **Use insect repellent with 20-30% DEET**
- Wear long sleeves and pants when hiking and working outdoors.
- Consider treating clothes and uniforms with permethrin.

****** Stay on the trails keep from brushing against grasses and small plants where the ticks 'lie in wait'.

IV. TICKS (CONT'D.)



HOW TO REMOVE A TICK:

- Use fine-tipped tweezers to grasp the tick as close to the skin surface as possible; do NOT squeeze the body of the tick as this will force disease-carrying fluids from it into your skin.
- Pull upward with steady, even pressure.
- After removing the tick, thoroughly clean the bite area and your hands with rubbing alcohol, an iodine scrub, or soap and water. A sanitizing hand wipe will do if that's what you have with you out on the trail.

IV. TICKS (CONT'D.)

What symptoms to look for if you think you've been bitten by a tick: fever, headache, muscle aches, dark scab where tick was attached.

It's a good idea to see your physician if you suspect a tick bite and have these symptoms.

V. JAVELINA (ALSO KNOWN AS PECCARY)



Cute?? (everyone's idea of cute may be different) But keep your distance.
You can usually smell them (they smell rather "skunky") or possibly hear them grunting before you see them. They don't usually attack but if you inadvertently find yourself between a parent and its offspring, it and others in the herd will protect and defend it!

(Note the not-so-cute fangs in the photo on the left.)

VI. BEARS

There are virtually no bears in Sabino Canyon. ***However, black bears do inhabit Mt. Lemmon and the rest of the Santa Catalinas.***

Brochures about bears and what to do in case of an encounter are available in the Sabino Canyon Visitor Center and it's a good idea to carry some of these with you to give to visitors when you're patrolling on Mt. Lemmon.



VI. BEARS (CONT'D.)

Some important points about bears:

- Bears will generally avoid barking dogs, but if hikers have a dog with them, the **dog must still be kept on a leash on any of the trails on Mt. Lemmon and not be allowed to run off into the forest after any animals, including bears.**
- If you see a bear near or on the trail ahead of you and it has not detected you, **retreat slowly or wait quietly** until it has moved away. **Do not move toward it.**
- If the bear has detected you, you'll want to let it identify you as a human and that you are no threat by speaking calmly and waving your arms (but remember their eyesight is fairly poor) and they will often give ground to you once they identify you as a human. You may still wish to detour around the bear, preferably upwind so the bear can get your human scent.

VI. BEARS (CONT'D)

- If the bear has detected you and shows signs of aggression, **DO NOT RUN**. You can't outrun it on any terrain. Try to retreat slowly and put more space between you and the bear. Speak calmly to it (and keep your backpack on to provide protection if necessary). **DO NOT MAKE DIRECT EYE CONTACT** as you back away but be aware if it moves toward you.
- It is not likely that you will be attacked by a black bear, but if it charges, try to climb a tree if possible. If contact is made, fight back with anything available to you, such as hiking poles. Black bears are generally timid and fighting back may surprise and scare it off.

It is not advisable to hike alone in areas where bears are present – hike with a buddy.

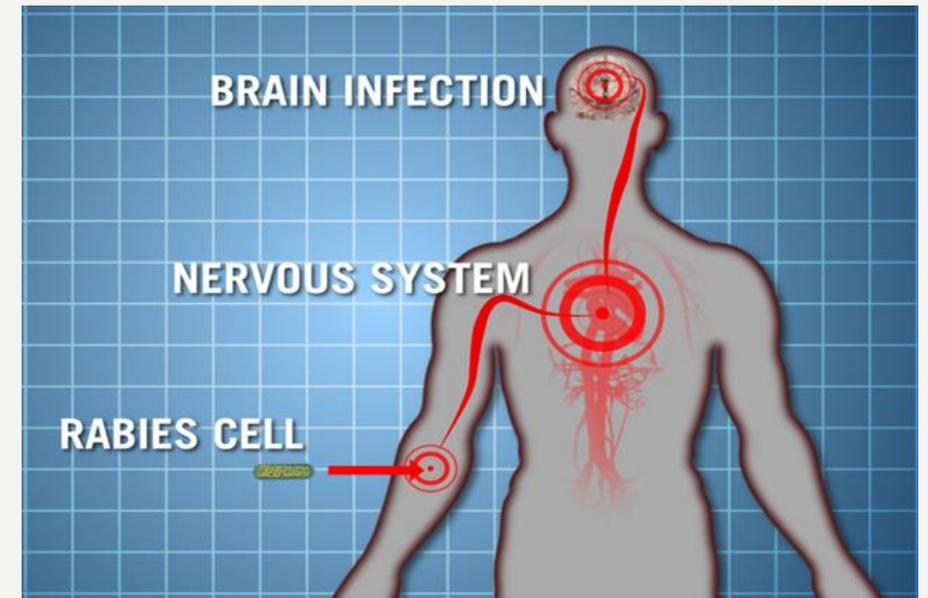
VI. RABIES

- Rabies is a disease that humans or ANY MAMMAL can catch from the bite or saliva of an infected animal.
- **Any mammal can get rabies, but bats, wild cats, raccoons, foxes, coyotes and skunks are more likely to get sick with rabies.**
- Rabid animals may lose their fear of humans, act strangely, or become aggressive.
- **If you see an animal that appears sick, injured or dying, DO NOT TOUCH IT. LEAVE IT ALONE!** Because of our policy of non-intervention, sick animals are not rescued or taken to rehab. **They are not pets** so we allow nature to take its course. **We do not rescue any animals and visitors are not to attempt a rescue.**

V. RABIES (CONT'D)

RABIES IS ALWAYS FATAL IF MEDICAL CARE IS NOT GIVEN IN TIME.

If you are bitten or scratched by an animal, you should immediately see a physician to see if you need medical care to prevent rabies. You cannot be certain if an animal has rabies without laboratory testing of its brain after death.



ALWAYS KEEP YOURSELF AND OTHERS SAFE !

