

MAKAJAWAN WILDLIFE PLAN

Safety Around Animals at Camp

Welcome to MaKaJaWan Scout Reservation. MaKaJaWan, which covers 1560 acres, offers a wide range of exciting adventures including the opportunity to observe many types of birds, fish, and other wildlife.

Throughout camp you will see numerous animals, especially squirrels, chipmunks, and common birds.

Undoubtedly the chance to observe a raccoon, a turkey, a deer, or an eagle, or maybe even a black bear, will provide lifelong memories.

Animals often will be an exciting part of your adventures. Seeing them in their natural habitat is always a pleasure, but it is wise to remember that they are the permanent residents of the backcountry or camp, while you are a visitor. Treat them with respect, give them enough space so they'll not feel threatened by your presence, and they'll seldom present a threat to your safety. When an animal feels frightened, threatened, or trapped, it may fight for its life by attacking, scratching, and biting. If you are injured by an animal, seek treatment quickly. A doctor must determine whether rabies treatments will be necessary.

Each animal that lives and roams throughout MaKaJaWan has its own characteristics and patterns of behavior. All wild animals, however, are drawn to food. If an animal doesn't find abundant food, it will move on. Most conflicts between people and wildlife, especially bears, are linked to careless handling of food or garbage. In a word, therefore, avoiding trouble with bears and most wildlife comes down to *food* and how you safeguard it. Learn to live responsibly with wildlife.

Young wild animals sometimes stray from their parents and appear to be lost or abandoned. In most cases, however, the parents know where the youngster is. "Taking in" apparently lost or abandoned young usually does more harm than good. Wild animals are best left in the wild. If an animal is obviously sick or injured, notify the camp ranger.

General Wildlife and Habitat Stewardship

- Hike on designated trails only.
- Keep a clean campsite.
- Keep food and "smellables" out of your tent.
- At night, hang food and smellables in a bear bag at least 12 feet above the ground.
- Do not feed wild animals.
- Never approach or follow wild animals.
- Do not attempt to take photographs of wild animals unless you can do so without disturbing them or altering their behavior in any way. This is best accomplished by using a zoom or telephoto lens. (Causing an animal to move away from you is an example of altering their behavior.)
- Avoid aggressive behavior:
 - Direct eye contact, even through a camera
 - Walking directly toward an animal
 - Following an animal that has chosen to leave
 - Circling or standing around an animal
- Don't mistake passive behavior in an animal as a sign that you are safe around that animal.
- Never tease or attempt to pick up wildlife.
- Leave young animals alone; a protective mother is usually nearby.
- Stay away from dead animals and berry patches, important food sources for bears.
- If a bear, cougar, or other potentially dangerous animal is sighted, immediately notify the camp ranger or camp director.

**FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION OR ASSISTANCE,
CONTACT YOUR CAMP DIRECTOR, RESERVATION HEADQUARTERS,
OR A CAMP RANGER. YOUR SAFE CAMP EXPERIENCE IS OUR COMMITMENT AND PRIORITY.**

Bats at Camp

Youth camps of all types are usually located in areas that are prime habitat for bats and other wildlife. The type of construction in camp buildings is often conducive to roosting bats.

Bats are among the wide range of wildlife typically found at camps. Their presence does not necessarily create a dangerous situation, but they should be avoided. Many bats are infected with rabies and some have been known to carry the plague virus. (See "Diseases Associated With Wildlife," on page 25.)

The buildings at MaKaJaWan are regularly inspected for evidence of the presence of bats. Consistent with Department of Health recommendations, bat-proofing takes place whenever needed. This includes sealing openings, screening windows and doors, etc. Camp personnel will take necessary steps to remove bats, using prescribed techniques of the Department of Health.

For questions about handling incidents, or to immediately report those that may require rabies treatment, immediately notify the camp ranger, camp medic, or camp director, so that they can take appropriate measures, including calling the local health department.

Bears

The area of Ma-Ka-Ja-Wan has been home to black bears since their earliest ancestors evolved in North America. These large, powerful animals play an important role in the ecosystem.

Today, increasing numbers of people routinely live and play in bear country. For many Scouts and leaders, seeing a bear is rare and may be one highlight of your camp experience. Learning about wildlife and being aware of bears' habits will help you fully appreciate these unique animals and the habitat in which they live.

Bears are intelligent and curious. They can see color, form, and movement. Although their vision is good, they generally rely on their acute senses of smell and hearing to locate food and warn them of danger. If a bear stands upright or moves closer, it may be trying to detect smells in the air. This isn't necessarily a sign of aggression.

Black Bears

Black bears, despite their name, are not always black. They may be honey-colored, blonde, brown, reddish-brown (cinnamon), or black. A black bear may have a tan muzzle or a white spot on its chest.

Black bears typically roam over large areas, with some home ranges covering hundreds of square miles. Black bears eat both plant and animal foods, but the bulk of their diet is usually plant material. The animal foods they eat are usually ants, grubs, and animals that are already dead or partially decayed. Above all, the black bear is an opportunist and will take advantage of almost any readily available food source, including "people food."

Bears may be active anytime, day or night, most often during morning and evening twilight. They like to stay concealed in thick cover such as dense oak brush, and normally expose themselves to open areas only to get food. When not feeding or looking for food, they rest in day beds next to a log, behind a large tree or a steep slope, in dense brush, or in the depression left by an uprooted tree. In late summer, black bears try to fatten up for winter hibernation. During this period they may actively feed for up to 20 hours per day.

Protecting Food and Property

Although black bears are generally shy and avoid contact with humans, there are some precautions you can take to further discourage encounters. You are responsible for doing all you can to prevent conflicts with bears.

The best way to prevent food pilfering by most animals, especially bears, is to keep a clean camp. The less food odor in your campsite, the less chance the animals will linger when they make their rounds. Wash dishes

immediately and dump the water away from camp. Dispose of garbage immediately in camp dumpsters. Never bury it or throw it in a latrine. Wipe your table and clean up immediately after eating.

Store your food safely. When possible, store food and coolers in a car trunk or suspended from a tree at least 12 feet off the ground and 6 feet out from the tree. Don't underestimate the ingenuity of a bear!

Most black bears will not enter a tent with people in it, but it is still a good idea to keep food and food odors out of tents and sleeping bags. Wash food from your face and hands before going to bed and hang clothing beyond reach of bears if it has food or cooking grease on it. To a bear, even toothpaste, camera film, and sunscreen are food. Store them accordingly.

When leaving your campsite, prevent possible damage to tents by tying tent flaps open so bears can easily check inside.

If a Black Bear Visits

A black bear in your campsite requires caution but not necessarily great alarm. Most black bears are timid enough to be scared away by yelling, waving, and banging pans. Make sure the bear has a clear escape route and then yell and wave. Do not rush toward the bear. Do not throw rocks, use flashbulbs, or approach a bear.

People are often more timid at night than they are during the day, but bears retreat at night as well as by day. If you awaken to discover a bear nearby, do not play dead and do not strike the bear. Talking in a calm tone of voice will let the bear know you are alive and well. If the bear is several feet away, you may be able to slip out of your sleeping bag and retreat. Back away slowly. Running may provoke a bear.

Coming between a female bear and her cubs is dangerous. If a cub is nearby, try to move away from it. Be alert—other cubs may be in the area.

Fortunately, black bears usually use at least as much restraint with people as they do with each other. Black bears typically behave as subordinate toward people when escape is possible.

Bee and Wasp Stings

Scrape away a bee or wasp stinger with the edge of a knife blade. Don't try to squeeze the stinger out of the skin. That will force more venom into the skin from the sac attached to the stinger. An ice pack may reduce pain and swelling.

Mosquitoes at Camp

There are many different types of mosquitoes. The *Culex pipiens* mosquito (the common house mosquito of the U.S.) has been identified as the carrier of West Nile virus. This particular mosquito feeds on infected birds and then bites humans. The symptoms of infection often include rapid onset of headache, high fever, disorientation, tremors, and convulsions. In only the most severe and rare cases is paralysis or death a result.

The most common breeding environment for this type of mosquito is stagnant water found in old tires and metal drums or containers. MaKaJaWan has been inspected for such conditions and they have been removed. Additionally, screened windows and doors of buildings have been repaired as necessary.

Precautions

To reduce the risk of mosquito bites, health authorities recommend

1. Minimizing outdoor activities between dusk and dawn.
2. Wearing long-sleeved shirts and long pants, whenever spending time in likely mosquito habitats such as woods or wetlands.
3. Using an insect repellent containing DEET, according to label instructions. In no case should DEET be sprayed directly onto children's skin.

The council will provide recommended insect repellents for administration by leaders for their youth campers as well as for personal use by adult leaders and camp staff. Specific details will be given by each camp director.

Rodents

Rodents are the primary carriers of *hantavirus*. It is believed that hantavirus as well as the agents of several other diseases are carried in the urine, feces, and saliva of deer mice, rabbits, beavers, and possibly other wild rodents. A person contracts hantavirus by coming into contact with rodent feces, urine, or saliva, or items that have been contaminated by them. Exposure frequently occurs when a person breathes dust from dried rodent feces and urine, especially when the dust is raised by sweeping. This illness is not suspected to be spread from one person to another.

Plague, a disease of rodents transmitted by fleas, is widespread in the western United States. Plague is sometimes detected in rock squirrels, prairie dogs, wood rats, marmots, and other species of ground squirrels and chipmunks. The incubation period is 2 to 6 days. Flulike symptoms include fever, chills, body aches, and trouble breathing. Consult the camp medic or a physician if sudden unexpected illness occurs within that period. Illness from plague can be treated successfully and cured if it is diagnosed early. (Also see "Diseases Associated With Wildlife," on page 25.)

Precautions

- Do not feed or entice any rodent or rabbit species into your camp.
- Do not catch, play with, or attempt to hand-feed wild rodents.
- Avoid contact with all sick or dead rodents and rabbits.
- Report infested areas to the camp ranger or camp director.
- Before hiking, treat pants, socks, shoe tops, arms, and legs with insect repellents to guard against fleabites.
- Wet down areas to be cleaned before mopping or sweeping them.

Resources: "Facts About Plague," Colorado Department of Health, 4300 Cherry Creek Drive South, Denver, CO 80246-1523; *Passport to High Adventure*, No. 18-041, Boy Scouts of America

Ticks

Ticks are small, hard-shelled bloodsuckers that bury their heads in the skin of warm-blooded animals. Protect yourself whenever you are in tick-infested woodlands and fields by wearing long pants and a long-sleeved shirt. Button your collar and tuck the cuffs of your pants into your boots or socks. Inspect yourself daily, especially the hairy parts of your body, and immediately remove any ticks you find.

If a tick has attached itself, grasp it with tweezers close to the skin and gently pull until it comes loose. Don't squeeze, twist, or jerk the tick, as that could leave its mouthparts in the skin. Wash the wound with soap and water and apply antiseptic. After dealing with a tick, thoroughly wash your hands. See a physician for any tick that has been attached to a human being for 48 hours or more.

Warning! Tick Season!

Please use the following precautions.

- Wear light-colored clothing.
- Stay on trails and not in areas of high brush.
- Wear clothing tucked in.
- Spray a repellent containing 20 to 50 percent DEET around shirt and trouser cuffs.
- Wear long-sleeved shirts.
- Check yourself and fellow campers for ticks.

Diseases Associated With Wildlife

Wild animals are susceptible to various infectious and parasitic organisms capable of causing disease. Human health may be harmed by direct contact with the animals or organisms.

General Precautions

- Do not feed wild animals or in any way encourage them to visit your campsite.
- Keep a clean campsite.
- Do not approach *any* wild animal.
- Do not approach or handle any wild animal that appears sick or is acting in an abnormal manner, even if it shows no fear of your approach.
- Stay away from dead animals.
- If you have come into direct contact with a wild animal, wash your hands thoroughly before eating, drinking, or touching the hands of another person.
- Do not touch animal scat.
- If you become sick shortly after being in contact with a wild animal, notify your Scouting leader and/or camp physician; if you have returned home, tell your parents and ask to see your doctor.

Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever

Rocky Mountain spotted fever most frequently strikes spring and summer campers and hikers who are exposed to certain species of hard ticks. Early symptoms include headache, chills, and fever. A rash appears on the extremities about the third day, initially localized on the wrists, hands, and ankles, then spreading to most of the rest of the body.

Although it was first recognized in the Rocky Mountain region, the disease is now found in nearly all states. Virginia accounts for a large percentage of reported cases.

If the disease is diagnosed early, Rocky Mountain spotted fever can be treated effectively. A vaccine is available but is not ideal for campers and hikers exposed for only several days.

Lyme Disease

The deer ticks responsible for the spread of Lyme disease are very small, no larger than a sesame seed. They are most active in the summer months. The first symptom is a bull's-eye rash around the bite location. This rash or spot expands over the next several days. The rash is followed by flu-like symptoms of fever, headache, muscle and joint aches, plus fatigue. If the tick is removed from the body within 24 hours, the chance of the tick transmitting Lyme disease is reduced.

The best way to avoid Lyme disease is to avoid tick-infested areas, especially in the summer. Deer ticks are most often found in wooded areas and nearby shady grasslands.

- Wear light-colored clothing so that ticks on clothes can easily be seen.
- Tuck pants legs into socks or boots.
- Tuck shirt into pants.
- Walk in the center of trails to avoid grass and brush.
- Inspect your body often and thoroughly.

Tularemia

Tularemia can be contracted from direct contact with an infected animal, from handling or eating insufficiently cooked meat (usually rabbit), through the bite of an infected tick or fly, or from drinking contaminated water. It is most commonly transmitted to humans from infected rabbits, primarily cottontails and jackrabbits. Rabbits with tularemia behave oddly, run slowly, are unable to raise their heads, and usually can be captured easily.

Rodents, such as beavers, muskrats, and voles, are also susceptible to tularemia. Ticks account for most of the transmissions of the disease to hikers and campers.

Symptoms appear between two and 10 days after exposure. Symptoms include an open ulcer at the bite site, swollen glands, and, if the bacteria were ingested, throat infection.

Rabies

Rabies is a viral disease that affects the central nervous system. It occurs in all warm-blooded animals with the possible exception of opossums. Wild animals including skunks, foxes, bats, and raccoons are the main carriers of rabies. The skunk has the highest rate of infection. Rabid animals are the source of infection for other animals and people. Rabies is usually transmitted by infected saliva on broken skin or abrasions.

The signs that an animal is rabid vary depending on the animal and the stage of the disease. Suspect rabies if a skunk is wandering around without fear of dogs or humans. Be especially careful if the skunk chases dogs, cats, or humans or is near buildings during daylight hours. Bats show little sign of the disease. Of farm animals, cattle are most often infected with rabies. When infected, cattle may wobble, bellow, yawn, or drool. Dogs may become affectionate and crave attention or try to hide in a dark secluded area. Dogs may resist restraint and attack any object in their path. Both dogs and cows may appear to have foreign objects in their throats.

All animal bites should be immediately and thoroughly cleansed and checked by a physician. The incubation period for rabies varies from two weeks to several months depending on the size and location of the wound. Head and neck wounds may have a shorter incubation period than wounds on other extremities.

In addition to animal vaccines, a human vaccine is available but mostly recommended for high-risk individuals such as veterinarians.

If you are bitten at camp, get a good description of the animal and notify the camp ranger as soon as possible after taking care of your medical needs. Wash the wound with soap and water, detergent and water, 43 percent to 70 percent ethanol, quaternary ammonia, or tincture of iodine. Contact the camp physician immediately.

Plague

Plague is a highly infectious disease transmitted by the bite of an infected flea, exhaled droplets or sputum from infected people, or direct contact with an infected rodent (prairie dog, squirrel, chipmunk, mouse, rat, marmot, vole). Plague is normally transmitted to humans by a flea that has earlier fed upon an infected animal.

Symptoms include shaking, chills, weakness, fever, headache, anorexia (loss of appetite), myalgia (muscle aches), nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, confusion, rapid pulse, and accelerated respiration.

There has been no serious outbreak in the United States since 1924. Even though the risk of plague is small, the danger remains. Awareness, coupled with caution, is good risk management.

- Do not handle wild rodents.
- Do not keep prairie dogs or other rodents as pets.

Hantavirus

See "Rodents."

West Nile Virus

See "Mosquitoes at Camp."

Resource: Wildlife Diseases and Man, by F. Robert Henderson, Extension State Leader, Wildlife Damage Control, Kansas State University; published by Great Plains Agriculture Council, Wildlife Resources Committee and the Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources, University of Nebraska–Lincoln.

Managing Bat-Related Incidents

- Campers should never attempt to have contact with bats at any time. The presence of bats should be reported to adult leaders as soon as possible.
- In the unlikely event a camper comes into direct physical contact with a bat, especially if the camper is bitten, report it to the camp health officer immediately.
- All bat-related incidents should be reported to the health department by camp staff.

If You Meet a Bear

1. Stay calm. Do not throw rocks, use flashbulbs, or approach a bear.
2. Back away slowly. Avoid direct eye contact.
3. Don't run or make sudden movements.
4. Speak softly in a calm, deep voice. Try not to show fear.
5. Give the bear plenty of room to escape.
6. Immediately report the encounter to an adult.

Protect Our Campsites *and* the Animals

- 1.** Keep site *clean* and remove trash to dumpsters frequently.
- 2.** Clean tables, fireplaces, grills, and areas around them; leave no scraps of food. Clean all cooking and eating utensils.
- 3.** Do not leave food of any kind inside or outside your tent. Do not eat food in your tent.
- 4.** Do not dump fat drippings or food scraps in your fireplace, on the ground, or in the woods.
- 5.** Do not place food to attract raccoons, squirrels, or other wildlife.
- 6.** Store all food properly as instructed.