



# Be a friend to WILDLIFE when HIKING



Albuquerque is a gateway to the great outdoors. We have spectacular opportunities for hiking, biking, and enjoying nature. Exploring the outdoors means being with wildlife – it's their home.

As an Albuquerque resident, be sure to enjoy our outstanding opportunities for outdoor recreation. Our city's backyard boasts a network of public Open Space areas, National Forests and State Parks. Numerous hiking trails traverse these areas and offer inspiring experiences for everyone, from trail runners and mountain bikers to the whole family.

The great outdoors is home to an abundance of

wildlife. Most visitors can expect to see lizards, birds, rabbits, squirrels, chipmunks, butterflies, and beetles. On occasion, wildlife sightings may include snakes, coyotes, bobcats, bears, and even mountain lions.

Wild animals, big and small, keep our ecosystems alive and healthy. When you enjoy our beautiful bosque, mountains, and mesa, please remember that we are guests in these animals' homes.

## Enjoy the space and leave no trace

Please be respectful of wildlife on your outdoor adventures. This will help prevent problems for people, pets, and wildlife.

### Protect wildlife:

- Hiking, biking, and other recreational activities can disturb wildlife. Please keep your footprint as small as possible.
- Respect trail etiquette, including staying on trails and taking out trash.
- Leash your dog; it's the law in Albuquerque's Open Space areas.

### Protect yourself, your kids and your pets:

- It's extremely rare that wildlife threatens or injures people, but it's good to be prepared.
- Be aware of your surroundings to avoid uncomfortable encounters.
- Keep your distance and don't approach or provoke an animal.

## ACTION TIPS

# Be a friend to wildlife. Here's what you can do.

### TIP #1

#### Don't disturb wildlife and vegetation

- Stay on marked trails, which are built and maintained to protect the land.
- Pack it in – pack it out: bring water and snacks but take your trash out.
- Keep your distance: don't approach, disturb, remove, or hunt any animal.
- Leave it as you find it: don't pick flowers, remove plants, or chop trees.
- Keep noise levels low to avoid disturbing wildlife (and your fellow hikers).
- Be aware of fire restrictions: no smoking, campfires, or motorized vehicles on Open Space trails.

### TIP #2

#### Stay safe when encountering wildlife

Encounters with bears, mountain lions, and bobcats are rare, but this is their home. Snakes are more common, though only rattlesnakes are venomous.

- Wear sturdy hiking shoes or boots and long pants.
- Watch where you place your hands and feet when stepping over large rocks or logs.
- Complete your hike before sunset.
- Keep your distance from wildlife.
- Don't run if you see a bear, mountain lion, bobcat, or coyote. Face the animal, but give them a way to escape. Back away slowly and alter your route. If the animal comes closer, make noise, raise your arms, and make yourself look bigger.
- Keep small children in view and pick them up if you see large mammals or snakes.

### TIP #3

#### Leash your dog

Leashing is the law in Open Space areas: use a leash no more than eight feet long (or a harness for your dog's comfort). Leashing will help protect both your dog and wildlife:

- It prevents most confrontations with wildlife—and other dogs—that could harm your dog, such as a rattlesnake bite.
- It protects small mammals from your dog; animals that get chased waste precious energy they could otherwise use in their search for food.
- It prevents your dog from damaging vegetation and soil, eating something that may be harmful, or getting injured from cacti.
- It prevents your dog's exposure to viruses, such as rabies and plague.
- It allows you to clean up after your dog, which prevents the spread of disease and pollution of ground water (bring your own bag – or pick up a mutt mitt at the trailhead – and make sure to take it back out).
- To let your dog run off-leash, visit an off-leash dog park near your neighborhood.

## NEED HELP?

If you're interested in conservation projects or trail maintenance, consider volunteering with Albuquerque's Open Space Division (505-768-4960).

If you witness prohibited activity during your hike, call the city's Open Space Police Officers at 505-242-COPS (2677).

If you witness poaching, report this to the New Mexico Game and Fish Department at 505-222-4700 (during office hours) or 505-827-9376 (weekends and after hours).