

# How to Handle Wildlife Encounters in the Rockies

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The beautiful Rocky Mountains of Colorado are home to a plethora of wildlife species. Antelope, moose, bears, elk, coyotes, deer and even (on rare occasions) *mountain lions* can be found in or around large cities like Boulder or Colorado Springs. With all of these animals near civilized areas, one can imagine there are plenty of animals to be found in the wilderness areas as well! With state-wide stay-at-home orders came a massive swell in outdoor recreation. While it's great that more people are going outdoors, more people in the wilderness means a higher probability of human-wildlife interactions. It is important that those who venture out have an understanding of how to conduct themselves if they come across one of Colorado's larger mammals. This page will go over some easy ways to mitigate the dangers involved with large mammal encounters in the wilderness.

“Every creature is better alive than dead, men and moose and pine trees, and he who understands it aright will rather preserve its life than destroy it.”

-Henry David Thoreau

## How to Act Towards Each Species

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### Black Bear

- Be loud! Avoid catching a bear by surprise by making sure it hears you coming.
- If a bear approaches, **never go towards it or run away**
- If the black bear continues after you, use bear spray. Make yourself look as big and threatening as possible
- If it attacks, **fight back at all costs**. You will never outrun a black bear, and playing dead is only effective with Grizzlies. (Grizzlies can no longer be found in Colorado)

## Moose

- Keep a safe distance. (200ft.) You should be able to close one eye, hold your hand up at arm's length, and cover the whole moose with your thumb.
- Do not attempt to look big or threatening. Stay quiet and peaceful.
- If a moose charges at you, run like your life depends upon it! (It very well may!)

## Elk

- Keep a safe distance of at least 100 feet.
- Never cross in between any group of elk.
- If an elk charges you, treat it like a moose. Run away quickly, put large obstacles such as trees or boulders in between you and the animal.

## Mountain Lion

- Be loud, make yourself look as threatening as possible.
- Maintain eye contact and **never run away**
- If it attacks, fight back using any possible means. (Use sticks, rocks, and anything else available)

Here is a link back to the [Colorado Springs News Hub Page](https://a-day-in-the-life-of-jonah.neocities.org/News_Hub_Assignment/Wildlife_Article.html).