

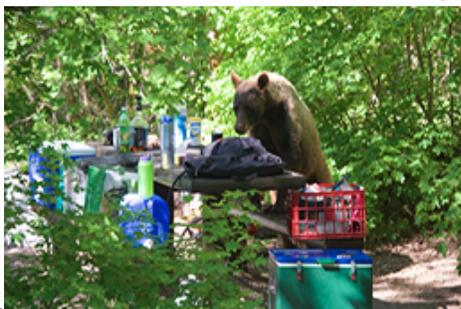
Ask an Expert: Be a Responsible Recreator in Utah's Outdoors

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07/12/2019

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A report released by the Utah Office of Outdoor Recreation touted that outdoor recreation in Utah contributes more than \$12.3 billion to the economy and provides jobs from more than 100,000 people. Utah outdoor recreation also generates over \$737 million in state and local tax revenues and provides over \$3.9 billion in wages and



salaries.

Major contributors to this impact are activities often referred to as "quiet recreation." These include camping, hiking, fishing, wildlife viewing and biking. Quiet recreation is generally non-motorized activity that excludes off-highway vehicle use, power boating, snowmobiling or driving for sightseeing. A report released by the Bureau of Land Management suggests that over 75 percent of outdoor recreation on public lands in Utah is quiet recreation.

As more people recreate in the outdoors, the chance of encountering wildlife also increases. By camping, hiking and biking irresponsibly, you may endanger yourself, your family and future visitors. If a wild animal receives a food reward from a human source, it can become food-conditioned.

This behavior can lead to the removal or death of the animal and increased risk of human injury. A recent issue of the journal, "Human-Wildlife Interactions," published by the Utah State University Berryman Institute, featured case studies and research from around the world that reported

on increased conflicts between humans and bears as a result of people acting irresponsibly.

Consider these tips to help you enjoy Utah's great outdoors and wildlife.

1. Store food carefully.

- * Do not leave food out. If an animal can see or smell food inside your vehicle, it may try to break in.
- * Secure food and trash in odor-free, bear-proof containers.
- * Keep food and strong-smelling toiletries 100 yards away from your sleeping area.
- * Hang trash or food 10 feet above the ground and 10 feet from the trunk of the tree or pole.
- * Do not leave pet food or dishes outside.
- * Do not put trash in the fire pit, and do not burn it.
- * Do not set food out to deliberately attract animals to your camp or picnic site.

2. Hike and bike with safety in mind.

- * Stay alert at dawn and dusk when animals are most active.
- * Always hike, jog or bike with a companion, and make noise to alert wildlife of your presence.
- * Keep children safe when hiking. Keep them within the group or in sight ahead of your group.
- * Avoid wearing ear buds or headphone, which can prevent you from hearing approaching wildlife.
- * Stay away from animal carcasses. There could be an unseen predator guarding its prey.
- * Stay on designated trails, and do not toss food or trash.
- * When hiking with pets, keep them supervised and under control. Dogs off leash can chase, injure or kill wildlife. Do not allow dogs to "play" with, harass or chase wildlife, as it is against Utah law.

3. Avoid wildlife on the trail.

- * Stay at least 50 feet (approximately three car lengths) away from wildlife. Always give the animal a clear escape

route. A crowded animal could become stressed and unpredictable.

* Snakes hide well on open trails and dense grasses. Be aware of your surroundings. Keep pets leashed.

* Don't let children or pets play with snakes. Look carefully where you set your hands and feet and where you sit. Always stay on paths and cleared areas, and wear closed-toed shoes while hiking.

* For more information on how to recreate responsibly in Utah's great outdoors, visit WildAwareUtah.org.