

Keeping Your Pets Safe Where Wolves are Present



In most situations, people and wildlife can coexist. The key is to respect the wildness of wildlife.

"Wildlife" is just that—wild. Most dangerous and potentially harmful encounters occur because people fail to leave the animals alone. Gray wolves, like all wildlife in Colorado, should not be harassed, captured, domesticated or fed.

Be alert and aware when recreating or living in the Colorado backcountry. To prevent problems with wildlife, give distance, keep calm and know your surroundings. It is important to always keep a clean camp or home site to avoid attracting any wildlife that might scavenge for food or prey upon other animals that are attracted to these feeding opportunities.

To protect both pets and wildlife, pets should always be carefully monitored by their owners in areas where they may encounter native wildlife, such as national forests, open space areas, parks and undeveloped parcels of land. Unsupervised dogs that stray from their owner's homes or from their handlers could be at risk of creating conflicts with wildlife.

At home

- Never feed wildlife
- Keep an eye on your pet, especially at dawn and dusk
- Don't leave dogs outside in an unprotected environment overnight.
- Homeowners should not leave dog food outside and avoid feeding wildlife near their homes.

In the field

- *Be respectful of wildlife* - Keep dogs on a short (6 foot) leash or in visual/auditory range and owners should vocalize frequently, including the use of whistles.
- *Be responsible* - Dogs should be trained not to chase or approach wildlife and to return on commands.
- *Know before you go* - Understand what wildlife may be in the area you like to recreate in and use extra caution recreating at dawn and dusk when most wildlife are active.
- Place a bell or a beeping collar on wider ranging dogs.

Currently the wolf population in Colorado is minimal and there is a very low likelihood of encountering a wolf in Colorado's wild. However, owners of dogs need to be aware of the potential risk if they are in or near known wolf populations or encounter a lone wolf, especially when guarding or herding livestock, hunting, accompanying hikers, or running at large. Wolves will treat dogs as interlopers on their territories and may attack, especially if the wolves have pups nearby. Wolves are by nature territorial and guard their territory from other canids, including coyotes and domestic dogs. Remember, it is NOT legal to shoot at or attempt to injure or kill a wolf even if a pet is threatened. Gray wolves in Colorado remain a state endangered species and killing a wolf in Colorado is a crime punishable with jail time, fines and/or the loss of license privileges.

How can I protect my dogs in areas where wolves may be present?

Wolves are by nature territorial and guard their territory from other canids, including coyotes and domestic dogs. Hunters who use dogs or anyone walking a dog where wolves are present should take steps to limit potential conflicts between their dog(s) and a wild wolf.

- Keep dogs within view.
- Place a bell or a beeping collar on wider ranging dogs.
- Talk loudly to the dog or other people with you, or use whistles.
- Control the dog so that it stays close to you and wolves associate it with a human.
- Place the dog on a leash if wolves or fresh sign are seen.
- Remember, it is NOT legal to shoot at or attempt to injure or kill a wolf even if your pet is threatened.

