

Algoma University Animal Care Committee	
#AU 0016 Encounters with Wild Animals	
Issue date: June 2012	Last revised: May 2025

1) Purpose

To establish guidelines and safety procedures for preventing dangerous interactions with wild animals and ensuring appropriate actions are taken if such encounters occur during university-affiliated outdoor activities. The SOP prioritizes personal safety, animal welfare, and legal compliance.

2) Policy

CCAC guidelines and regulations

3) Responsibility

Principal investigator, their research staff, and their student investigators

4) Training Required

Completion of the training videos listed in Materials Required

Prior to working in the field you will need to watch the provided departmental videos:

- Staying Safe in Bear Country Part 1
- Working in Bear Country Part 1

NOTE: The part 2 to both of these videos are the French language version, if that is easier for you to understand, they contain the same useful information

5) Materials Required

- Bear Spray or Air Horn
- Whistle or Noise Maker
- First Aid Kit
- Wildlife Identification Guide
- Flashlight

Definitions:

Wild Animals: An unplanned, direct interaction with wildlife (e.g., seeing, hearing, or being approached by a wild animal)

Defensive Behavior: Animal actions signaling threat (growling, charging, bluffing).

Habituated Animal: Wildlife accustomed to humans, potentially increasing risk of aggressive or bold behavior

Wildlife awareness and Risk Assessment

Animal	Risk	Notes
Bears	Injury, Death	Active in forests, mountains; drawn to food
Snakes	Bites, Venom	Found in brush, under rocks, warm areas
Large Cats (Cougars)	Stealth Attack	Rare but dangerous
Insects (Bees, Wasps, Hornets, Yellow Jackets)	Stings which could result in Anaphylaxis	Direct Threat Disturbing nests is a trigger

6) Procedures

Pre-Activity Planning

1. Research local wildlife and active species during the season
2. Map out known wildlife habitats or crossing zones
3. Identify emergency exit routes and safe zones

Prevention/Precaution:

1. Travel in groups of 2 or more when in Wildlife territory
2. Make regular (Talk, Clap) noise as you move through wooded areas, which will generally alert animals to your presence and give them a chance to leave the area.
3. Never feed or attempt to touch wild animals
4. Avoid leaving food, trash, or scented items exposed
5. Wear neutral colored clothing that blends with surroundings

Procedure:

1. Stay Calm and avoid sudden movements
2. Do not approach an animal to get a better look. Slowly and quietly back away while watching the animal to make sure it isn't following you.
3. If the animal continues to approach, drop any food you may be carrying and use your whistle or air horn as you continue to slowly back away.
4. Do not run; most predators are triggered by fleeing
5. Slowly back away while facing the animal
6. Speak in a calm, firm voice
7. Contact the Ministry of Natural Resources immediately and notify them of the location of the animal. If the animal makes contact with you in any way, seek medical attention.

Post Encounter Protocol:

1. Leave the area calmly and regroup
2. Conduct a headcount of all participants
3. Provide First aid if injuries occurred

4. Use emergency communication tools if needed

Medical Emergency Procedures

1. If a person is injured by an animal:
2. Call emergency services (911 or designated campus contact depending on severity)

Administer First Aid:

For bleeding: Apply pressure

For bites: wash wound, cover, and seek care

For allergic reactions: Use an Epi Pen

Transport to the nearest medical facility

REVISION HISTORY		
Revision #	Revision Date	Summary of Changes
1	November 2019	Modified
2	May 2024	Additional review by Algoma H&S Office
3	May 2025	Reformatting
4	May 2025	Department of Life, Health & Safety and Security, reviewed and provided comments and additions to SOP.