

FISH CREEK PROVINCIAL PARK

Wildlife Encounters

PARK NOTES

Fish Creek: A Shared Land

For approximately 8,500 years, humans and wildlife have shared the Fish Creek valley. The area attracts an array of wildlife because of ample food, water and shelter. The valley also acts as a corridor allowing wildlife to move through the area and on to other destinations.

To Everything a Season...

You just never know what you're going to see or hear when you visit Fish Creek Provincial Park – it is a seasonally changing, wild space! Some wildlife you will find all year round, while other species reside only seasonally. Wildlife species such as cougars, black bears, and moose use the habitat in the Park infrequently. These animals are either using the Park as a transportation corridor or are making use of seasonally available food (e.g. berries) and water.

Treading Carefully

The diversity of wildlife that can be found in Fish Creek Provincial Park is a sign of good ecological health. An intact and functioning ecosystem requires a variety of plant-eating animals and predators. During your visit to any natural area it is important to be aware of a possible wildlife encounter. Practicing the following behaviours will lessen the chance of an unwanted encounter with wildlife.

- Stay on marked designated pathways
- Keep children within view at all times
- Keep all pets on a short leash, walking beside you
- Be aware of your surroundings and sounds
- Ensure that natural sounds, such as flowing water, do not mask the sound of your approach
- Leave the area immediately if you come across any type of animal kill
- Keep food and garbage away from wildlife



Cougar

Cougars

If you encounter a cougar:

- Raise your arms or a stick in the air making yourself appear as large as possible
- Make eye contact, shout, be aggressive, and demonstrate you are dominant
- Keep small children and pets close by and do not allow them to run
- if attacked, throw rocks and fight back with any available objects

For more information about cougars view and download the brochure *Living with Cougars* at:

www.tprc.alberta.ca/parks/cougar

For more information contact:

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Alberta

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Bears

If you encounter a bear:

- Never Run - you cannot outrun a bear and running may excite the bear and cause an attack.
- Do not harass or chase the bear.
- If bear cubs are in the area, move away from them.
- Slowly back away from the bear; if the bear continues to move toward you, drop your backpack or other belongings - this may distract the bear.
- In an encounter with a non-charging bear or a bear with cubs, you should appear passive; do not raise your voice.



Black Bear
Photograph courtesy of Alita Pelle

For more information about bears view and download the *Alberta Parks Bear Smart* brochure at:
www.tprc.alberta.ca/parks/safety

If you do see a bear, cougar or signs of these animals' presence, please report it by telephoning (403) 297-5293. This will enable conservation officers to monitor the animal's movements and behaviours. It does **NOT** necessarily mean the animal will be removed from the area. Fish Creek Provincial Park has a *Wildlife/Human Conflict Prevention Plan* in place for such occurrences. The plan addresses various situations with a measured response consistent with provincial standards. Please respect posted wildlife warning signs and associated closures.



Mule Deer

Large Ungulates (Deer, Moose, Elk)

Deer are commonly found throughout the park at all times of the year. Moose and elk are rare visitors that occasionally wander from surrounding wildlands. All large hoofed animals are unpredictable and potentially dangerous, particularly when protecting their young or during mating season (Autumn).

Bobcats

These medium sized cats have increasingly been sited in the park over the past few years. They are capitalizing on good habitat and abundant prey including hares, squirrels, and unattended free-ranging pets. Bobcats are **NOT** cougars - the key difference is in the tail - a cougar's tail is very long (half its body length) while a bobcat's tail is a short stub.

Although smaller than cougars, show bobcats respect by giving them plenty of space.

The Fish Creek valley has always been a wild place providing habitat for wildlife. With any urban area fringing a natural space, you always should be aware and prepared for encountering wildlife.



Bobcat
Photograph courtesy of
Douglas A. Schmidt