

Tips for Protecting Wildlife (from Vermont Fish & Wildlife and the GCC)

For wildlife to thrive, viewers need to keep a healthy distance. Remember, the less interaction wild animals and birds have with people, the less stressed they'll be and the better chance they'll have to succeed. Some common sense and a little perspective is what it takes to share the outdoors with wildlife.

- **Stay Away from Nests**

Nesting birds, particularly loons, herons, and eagles, are sensitive to disturbance from people. You may also inadvertently lead a predator straight to the nest.

- **Wildlife Doesn't Need "Saving"**

Resist the temptation to "save" baby animals such as birds, deer or foxes that you may find alone in the woods. The mother is likely watching from a safe distance and will not return until you are gone. If you're really concerned that an animal looks injured or unwell, contact a wildlife rehabilitator.

- **Maintain a Safe Distance**

Animals change their behavior when humans are around. Wildlife such as moose and bear may become dangerous if people get too close to them. The Vermont Fish & Wildlife website (www.vtfishandwildlife.com) lists simple precautions you can take if you encounter a bear in your yard or in the woods.

- **Don't Feed Wildlife**

Wildlife does best when it is not given human food. Bird-watchers should bring feeders in between April and November to avoid attracting bears. Also, clean grills promptly and don't store trash, food or pet food where it may tempt bears and other wildlife.

- **Keep Pets Away from Wildlife**

Don't allow your dog to chase wildlife, as the additional stress can be very difficult for many animals to endure. Consider keeping your cat indoors, as housecats that roam outside kill millions of songbirds and other small animals every year and are often targets for fishers and other predators.

- **Minimize Outdoor Lighting**

Night lighting is disorienting to wildlife and can adversely affect animals. Select light fixtures that direct light downward to where it is needed by humans, not out and up to where it creates light pollution.

- **Leave No Trace**

Respect landowners' privacy and ask permission to access land. Don't leave trash in the outdoors as wild animals may mistake the trash for food and can choke on it.

- **Share Wildlife with All Users**

Birders, hunters, photographers and anglers may all seek wildlife during the same times and places. Do what you can to avoid overlapping with other users. While it's safe to be in the woods during hunting seasons, be sure to wear bright colors.

Trail Camera Tips from Kelly Price, Our Local Game Warden

- Don't put cameras on private land without permission.
- Don't share photographs of people or their homes (and avoid taking them whenever possible).
- Set up the camera near natural food sources such as beech or apple trees.
- Consider putting a cable lock on your camera to prevent theft.
- Feeding deer and bear is illegal at any time of year for any reason (including hunting).
- Any constant food source is considered a feeding station and can influence behavior of animals and also their interaction with humans.
- Occasional use of road kill to attract meat eaters is permissible. Pull the road kill far off the road and away from any houses. Set up a camera nearby.

Other Resources

- **Using Trail Cameras to Study Wildlife**

A 60-minute video by wildlife tracker Janet Pesaturo showing how trail cameras work and how to set them up. (https://media.unh.edu/media/Using+Trail+Cameras+to+Study+Wildlife+Behavior/1_1889kykr)

See also Janet Pesaturo's book entitled *Camera Trapping Guide* for photography techniques as well as photos and information on each animal's physical characteristics, tracks, diet, scat, habitat, breeding, as well as specific camera-setting tips.

- **Wild About Guilford** (www.inaturalist.org/projects/wild-about-guilford)

View over 1300 photos that Guilford residents and visitors have shared on *iNaturalist*, a citizen science website that documents observations of plants and animals around the world. If you join *iNaturalist* (www.inaturalist.org), you can share your own photographs, which will be automatically added to the *Wild About Guilford* page.

- **Introduction to the Staying Connected Initiative**

(www.youtube.com/watch?v=YfLHznanUrk)

A short video about a collaborative effort to protect forest connectivity across the Northern Appalachian mountain region, of which Guilford is a part.

About the Guilford Conservation Commission

The Conservation Commission holds regular meetings at 5:30pm on the third Thursday of each month in the Town Office or via Zoom. If you'd like to suggest future program ideas or participate in our meetings, walks, activities or join a working committee, contact chair Linda Hecker (lrhecker47@gmail.com).