

## A LIVELYHOOD FOR PEOPLE AND WILDLIFE

Many people try to conserve resources and recycle their waste to save energy and money. While the goal seems simple, some conservation ideas are not always sound outside major metropolitan areas, at least not without modification.

**Apiaries** (bee hives). Professionals and hobbyists can have problems with bees and bears. When living in grizzly country, it's best to avoid raising bees all together. However, if you feel you must have an apiary, contact the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Grizzly Bear Recovery Coordinator in Missoula or the Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks to discuss your plans and how to best avoid conflicts with grizzlies on the prowl for honey and bee larvae.

**Compost Piles** often inadvertently become wildlife feeders. Organic foods are both odoriferous and tasty to skunks, deer, elk, bear and other critters that are constantly searching for nutrition, be it natural or restaurant-rejects. If you need compost for your garden, enclose it well or try to combine efforts with neighbors so that composting takes place in an area that will not attract wildlife. Or consider an "under the sink" five-gallon bucket with a tight fitting lid.

**Gardens** bring nutrition, savings and sanity to many people who take great pride in their ability to be self-sustaining. And while gardens attract animals from mice to deer, you can protect your labors from unwanted visitors.

Fencing gardens, one-foot below ground level and up to eight feet above ground, often keeps deer and large rodents from eating your greens. Some gardeners have recommended double fences in the belief that deer will not jump two fences, even short ones. However, barbed wire or loose wire/netting is a certain trap and can maim or trap even the most agile wildlife.



Be sure to maintain your plot to prevent rotting vegetable matter from attracting those with sensitive noses such as bears. In addition, planting unpalatable species is often recommended, but since deer are like people with individual tastes, there is no guarantee. It's simply best to avoid plantings that are known to attract wildlife.

**Orchards.** If you plant fruit trees in areas frequented by deer or beavers, you will undoubtedly experience competition for the fruits of your labor. Most farm supply outlets sell fencing to protect fruit trees from deer and beavers until the trees are of sufficient height to be out of reach from the most persistent deer. Planting orchard trees more than 100-feet from streams, lakes and irrigation ditches will also help dissuade beavers from paying a visit.

Bears are also attracted to orchards, particularly orchards that are not promptly harvested. As with compost piles, it is important to remove rotting organic matter to avoid attracting bears, a species that travels miles to reach prime feeding areas, including tended orchards. If possible, in grizzly country, it is safest to forego planting fruit trees. After all, anyone can grow a tree - but only a very small fraction of the American public can live in grizzly habitat.

## LANDSCAPING WITH WILDLIFE

**Flowers** also attract deer and others who eat tender plant shoots. Sometimes the attraction is intentional, sometimes not. Boulder, Colorado (one of the few urban areas in the West with their own city-managed deer herd) has published a guide to the most heavily browsed flowers enjoyed by their deer. Among the findings:

FLOWER	BROWSING FREQUENCY
Penstemon, low	Often
Phlox, common	Often
Salsify	Often
Strawberry	Often
Sunflower, low	Often
Tulips	Often
Onion	Often
Flax, blue	Rarely
Rhubarb	Rarely
Harebell, mountain	Rarely

The Boulder study also suggests the following for **grasses, trees and shrubs**:

GRASSES	BROWSING FREQUENCY
Bluegrass	Often
Timothy	Sometimes
Wheatgrass, crested	Sometimes
Wheatgrass, western	Sometimes
Buffalgrass	Rarely
Gamma, blue	Rarely

TREES/SHRUBS	BROWSING FREQUENCY
Roses, most	Often
Juniper, rocky mountain	Often
Olive, russian	Sometimes
Pine, ponderosa	Sometimes
Pine, lodgepole	Sometimes
Plum, wild	Sometimes
Pine, limber	Rarely
Pine, mugo	Rarely
Spiraea,	Rarely
Spruce, blue	Rarely
Spruce, engelmann	Rarely

As with people, individual tastes vary and while one animal or species may avoid your painstakingly landscaped yard like the plague, another may wish to partake of your diligently set "dinner table" on a regular basis. And remember, you can help wildlife while challenging your green thumb by gathering and re-establishing native plants on your property.

## WELCOME & UNWELCOME VISITORS

**Landscaping** around your home can also attract wildlife, from birds to long-legged mammals. In general, the denser the foliage on your trees and shrubs, the better the hiding cover for songbirds. Different trees and bushes attract different animals. The Forest Service notes:

If you'd like to see songbirds in your back yard, you'll need to have deciduous trees and shrubs such as cottonwood, aspen, paper birch and mountain maple or ninebark.

Insects feed on leaves, attracting insect-eating warblers, kinglets and vireos. Conifers attract birds such as chickadees, nuthatches and juncos, especially in winter, because the densely needled branches offer protection from the cold. Fruit-bearing plants such as crabapple, mountain ash, juniper and serviceberry are sure to attract all kinds of animals like waxwings, grackles, chipmunks, squirrels, deer and bear.

By attracting birds you should also expect to attract their predators so do not be upset if a hawk snatches an occasional finch from your yard.



## LOG HOMES - FOR WILDLIFE

Live trees are not the only home for wildlife. Too often we forget that other species live in log homes. The Forest Service observes that over 40 different kinds of animals use holes in dead and dying trees or logs on the ground. What do they use them for? Almost everything: nesting, sleeping, feeding, perching and attracting a mate. **Snags**, or standing dead trees, make great wildlife habitat for:

**Woodpeckers** which dig holes in snags to make their nests. **Bluebirds, nuthatches and kestrels** which nest in old woodpecker holes. **Black bears, foxes, raccoons, martens and squirrels** which den in snags or logs. **Songbirds** which sing from the tops of dead tree branches. **Bald eagles** which often choose the tallest snag on a lake or river to use as a perch to hunt for fish. Small forest birds which will pack together in holes to sleep and to stay warm. **Bats** which roost beneath the loose bark of snags. **Saw-whet owls** which raise owlets in snags.

Forest wildlife call trees their home, the Forest Service concludes. With luck and some foresight on our part, we can keep their homes, and ours, intact by retaining snags as homesites and feeding perches for owls, eagles and osprey.

## A SPECIAL NOTE

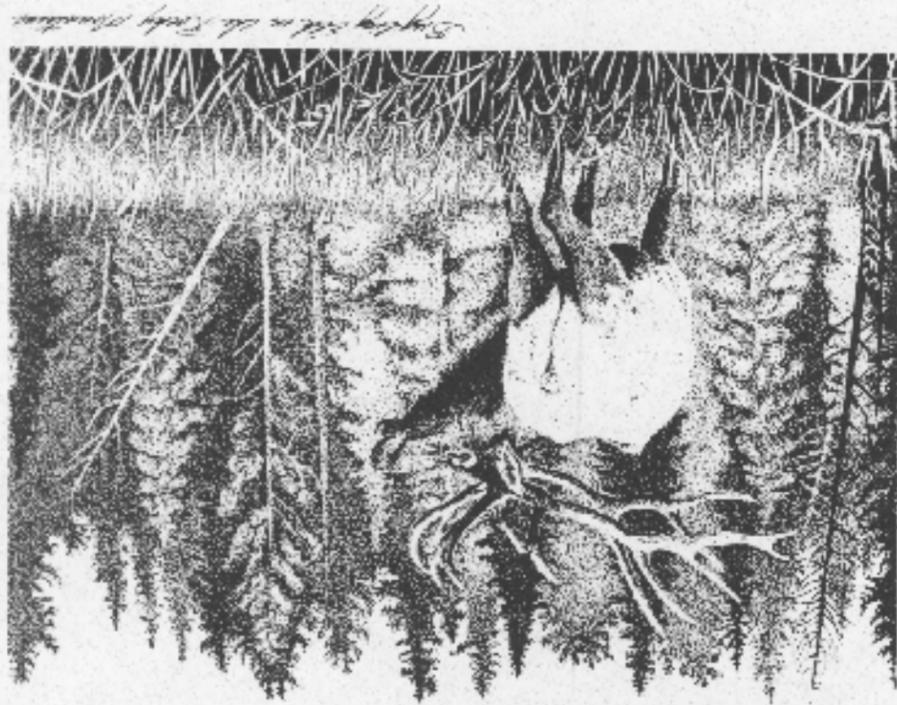
**On Lions.** Lions (cougars, mountain lions) often receive a great deal of publicity. While the chances of encountering a lion are very slim, certain precautions will help keep your rural home from becoming a "destination resort" for this species:

1. Do not feed the deer. Deer are a preferred prey species for lions and by providing salt blocks, grain and other foods for deer one also attracts their predators.
2. Keep pets at home. Cats & dogs can become easy prey for lions. Dogs can also wound deer which then attract large predators such as lions. Keep pet food indoors.
3. Teach children to identify various wildlife species in your neighborhood. Several children's books are available which will help teach the distinctions between lions and other animals. Then be sure to instruct your children to stay indoors and inform you immediately if a lion is sighted in the neighborhood. Since lions have extensive home ranges, the chances are great that the animal will move on if it fails to find food associated with residential development or livestock operations.
4. If facing a mountain lion, be loud, appear as "big" as you can and pick-up any children in the area. For more specific information on what action to take if you see a mountain lion, contact the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks in Missoula.

**And Wolves.** Wolves are scattered throughout western Montana and will become increasingly common in wild areas. Wolves tend to avoid people and are not a threat to humans. However, wolves may attack a dog or livestock in their territory, particularly if they feed on livestock carcasses that have not been properly removed. To avoid conflicts with resident wolves:

1. Properly dispose of attractants, including livestock carcasses.
2. Keep family dogs close to home or confined at night. This will prevent harassment of wildlife and a potential fight between your dog and a wolf.





work and recreate. A desirable place to live, and the wildlife that make Montana such a desirable place to live, to protect your animals and fences to sturdy cages and fences and livestock, so build sentence for predators ally results in a death before raising such animals. An attack on family and to wildlife the costs to both your please carefully weigh to rural homeowners, of source of income be an enjoyable hobby domestic animals can many species. While they become an attractive food source to predators. Consequently, against native predators with no defense chickens, turkeys, pigs, sheep and goats have been

**Domestic animals** such as rabbits, chickens, turkeys, pigs, sheep and goats have been

Around the house the goals are clear: keep pets under control and food under wraps. Garbage and home piles attract wildlife and other animals, so it is best to keep a clean home site at all times. Store the bar-b-que grill indoors. And make your work a community effort - the neighbors' garbage might just attract a mountain lion that decides your family dog would make a great meal late one night.

**A COMMUNITY EFFORT**

The same is true for pet food: Montana is no stranger to the use of pet foods by bears looking for a "free" meal. Since the grizzly bear is a threatened species, if a grizzly is attracted to pet food you leave out, fines or imprisonment could result and could also cause the needless killing of the animal.

If you wish to augment certain wild populations without endangering either them or yourself, consider installing bird feeding stations and nesting boxes a safe but visible distance from a good picture window. Placing such items too close to a window will invite collisions as birds misidentify your window's reflection as open space. One bird, the fascinating woodpecker, can quickly damage houses with wood siding, particularly cedar siding. Consequently, it is advisable to consult with neighbors to determine if these creatures have caused problems to others before attracting them to your home.

**Eliminating access** to building foundations, pipe piles and unused culverts, porches and other areas will discourage skunks and other species from taking up residence.

**"SIMPLE SOLUTIONS" REFERENCE SHEET**

The Indian Creek Nature Center publishes a concise damage reference sheet in "There's a Bat in the Attic and a Woodchuck in the Garden". An abridged and supplemented version is reproduced below. Copies of the book are sold by the Center, 6685 Oak Road SW, Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52401.

Species	Common Problem	Prevention or Solution
Bats	Flying in house Knocking in Attic	Turn off lights. Open windows and doors. Plug entry holes after bats have left. Supply no trunks.
Cottontails*	Eating garden plants Girdling tree bark	Fence. Use trap. Wrap trunks. Lure with branches for food.
Snakes	In basements In yards	Remove snakes. Plug entry holes. Reduce clutter. Eliminate rodents. Prevent predators (cats, dogs, coyotes).
Mice	In houses	Remove food sources. Trap. Prevent predators (cats, dogs, coyotes).
Skunks	In buildings, etc.	Plug entry holes after they have left. Use trap and remove. Keep pet food inside. Secure compost pile. Remove unused culverts, pipes, etc.
Raccoons	In house	Keep fireplace damper closed. Plug entry hole.
Various animals	In garbage	Secure cans**
Woodpeckers	Drumming on house Destroying siding	Remove or cover drumming object. Plug up holes between overlapping siding.



**LIVING WITH WILDLIFE**



*A Guide To Coexistence*

This pamphlet is intended for residents and property owners who share their homesites with wildlife. Few people in the world have this opportunity and we are fortunate to experience almost daily the wildlife others may see only once in a lifetime.

Since sharing land with others is not always an easy task, Missoula County and Brown Bear Resources cooperatively published this booklet to help reduce conflict between people and wildlife. It is our hope that "Living With Wildlife" will be beneficial to you - and to your wild neighbors.

Key to successful coexistence is the recognition that wild animals are in fact wild and can harm humans or their property with seemingly little provocation. "Living With Wildlife" will not guarantee the absence of conflict or injury, but it will reduce problems. However, as more people move into wildlife habitat, conflicts may increase unless we respond by taking the precautions outlined here. With mounting development pressure in formerly wild areas, it is up to us to decide if the wildlife which attracts new residents will survive into the future.

While reading the brochure, remember that our domestic animals and pets are not adapted to wild environments. Each resident must carefully consider the responsibilities that accompany the introduction of such animals into the habitat occupied by our wild friends.

**Habitat Improvement References**

To learn more about avoiding conflicts with wild animals while improving their habitat, contact the following agencies:

- Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks  
3201 Spurgin Road  
Missoula, Montana 59803  
406-542-5500
- U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Grizzly Bear Recovery Coordinator  
NS 312  
University of Montana  
Missoula, Montana 59812  
406-329-3223
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Montana Wolf Recovery Program  
301 S. Park  
Helena, Montana 59626  
406-449-5225

**Acknowledgments**

Special thanks to the numerous agencies that participated in gathering information for this publication. The U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service; U. S. Forest Service (Lolo Forest) and Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks contributed greatly as did private organizations such as the Indian Creek Nature Center.

For more information, contact the Missoula County Rural Planning Office, 200 West Broadway, Missoula, Montana 59802 or Brown Bear Resources, 315 South 4th East, Missoula, Montana 59801.

