

Flip Book for Respect Wildlife session of
Leave No Trace Trainer Course.

- See page 31 of BSA Leave No Trace Trainer Course Manual
- Session length: 15 minutes
- Incorporates Jeff Marion power point
- Activity: Rule of Thumb



Visitor Impacts to Wildlife



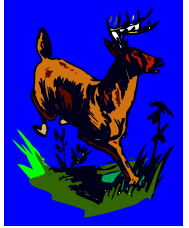
Seeing wildlife is often an important part of a “high quality” outdoor experience for most visitors. However, our presence and actions can cause significant impact to wildlife. These slides will examine this important issue and reveal how we can avoid or minimize these impacts.

Visitor Impacts to Wildlife





Presentation Objectives



1. Review and illustrate visitor impacts to wildlife.
2. Review how education and low impact practices can avoid or minimize visitor impacts to wildlife.



Review the objectives:

1. Review and illustrate visitor impacts to wildlife
2. Review how education and low impact practices can avoid or minimize visitor impacts to wildlife

Ask the participants if any of them have ever done this? Approached wildlife with a camera to “get the perfect picture.”

If you thought that it was OK because you were “just one person” you should know that the public lands see approximately 700 million visitors annually.



The slide is titled "Presentation Objectives" and is framed by a black border. It features two small icons in the top corners: a person on the left and a horse on the right. The main content consists of two numbered points. Below the text is a photograph of a person in a red shirt standing in a rocky, grassy field with several white sheep. The text "What if everyone did this?" is overlaid on the photograph in a blue, italicized font.

Presentation Objectives

1. Review and illustrate visitor impacts to wildlife.
2. Review how education and low impact practices can avoid or minimize visitor impacts to wildlife.

What if everyone did this?



Recreational Use: Potential for Wildlife Disturbance

Wildlife-related Recreation – 66.1 million people in the U.S. engaged in wildlife watching (feeding, observing, photography) in 2001.

This is more than hunting (13 million) and fishing (34 million), combined.



So-called “non-consumptive” wildlife-related recreation, such as wildlife watching, is increasing every year and land managers have documented many impacts to wildlife.

In contrast, “consumptive” recreation activities, such as hunting and fishing, have been declining over the last two decades.

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Visitor Impacts to Wildlife

- **Habitat alteration**
- **Wildlife disturbance & harassment**
- **Modification of wildlife behavior**
- **Displacement of wildlife from food, water, cover**
- **Reduced health & reproduction**
- **Increased mortality**

Here are some of the different impacts to wildlife related to recreational visitation.

Begging is an example of modified wildlife behavior and displacement means that the wildlife is being separated from important habitat by the presence of visitors.



Visitor Impacts to Wildlife

Habitat alteration

Wildlife disturbance & harassment

Modification of wildlife behavior

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Potential Impacts of Recreation

Habitat Modification – alteration of wildlife habitat through vegetation or soil disturbance.

Examples: Loss of trees, shrubs, or groundcover, vegetation compositional changes, loss of organic litter, compaction and erosion of soil

Locations: Recreation facilities, trails, campsites, wildlife viewing areas

Camping causes substantial habitat change, particularly the removal of wood and brush from cutting trees and shrubs (live and dead) for campfires. Many campers think its “OK” to cut down dead trees for firewood, but such trees provide very important habitat for cavity-nesting wildlife and the insects upon which wildlife feed.

The proliferation of informal (visitor-created) trail networks is also a significant problem that can fragment wildlife habitat.

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Potential Impacts of Recreation

Disturbance / Harassment – events that cause excitement and/or stress, disturbance of essential activities, severe exertion, or displacement.

Examples:

Unintentional – Hiking & camping in areas of critical wildlife habitat.

Intentional – Photographers pursuing wildlife subjects.



Wildlife disturbance and harassment is perhaps the most significant type of recreation impact to wildlife. Visitors love to view wildlife in their native habitat but we often get too close and the wildlife flee.

Given the large number of outdoor visitors within all parts of protected natural areas this is becoming a significant problem.

Potential Impacts of Recreation

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Unintentional – Hiking & camping in areas of critical wildlife habitat.

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Potential Impacts of Recreation

Wildlife Feeding – establishment of unnatural and unhealthy food dependencies that may alter wildlife behavior or populations.

Examples:

Unintentional – Campground food scraps, poorly stored food obtained by bears.

Intentional – Feeding deer or campground chipmunks and birds.

Wildlife feeding, intentional and unintentional, is perhaps the second most significant type of visitor impact to wildlife.

What seems like a small amount of food to us may be a meal for some wildlife. When they obtain even small scraps of food it can alter their natural behavior.

Fed wildlife become beggars and lose their ability to find their native food when humans are not around. Fed wildlife doesn't effectively teach their young how to forage for native food, often a death sentence for young animals.

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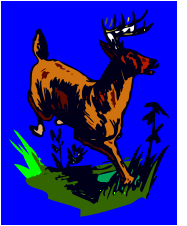
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Recreation Impacts: Consequences for Wildlife



Alteration of Behavior – animals may modify their daily activities:

Avoidance – development of a negative association with humans.

Habituation – waning of response to repeated disturbance, not associated with a positive reward.

Attraction – development of a positive association with humans because of food

Avoidance is an innate behavior in most wildlife, which generally keeps them safe.

Habituation is generally good; wildlife can often remain in areas with recreationists and continue obtaining the food they need.

Attraction behaviors, seeking out humans for food, are never good for wildlife. These animals generally have much shorter lives because they are hit by cars, killed by dogs or cats, die of starvation during the “off-season” in parks, or expose themselves to native predators when they venture away from cover to obtain human food.



Recreation Impacts: Consequences for Wildlife



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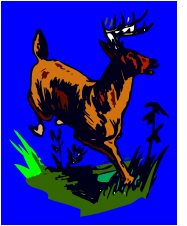
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Recreation Impacts: Consequences for Wildlife



Displacement – animals are forced away from preferred habitats either during certain times (**temporal displacement**) or in certain places (**spatial displacement**).

New habitats are unfamiliar, often have lower quality food and cover, or increased competition and predation.



Animals that run or fly away when humans get too close can abandon their nests or young.

Animals live and hang out in the places that best suit their needs. When they flee from our presence they are always moving from their preferred habitats to less preferred habitats that may not provide the food, cover, or water they need to survive.

One group of visitors moving an animal around once a day is generally not a problem. However, our public lands get millions of visitors...

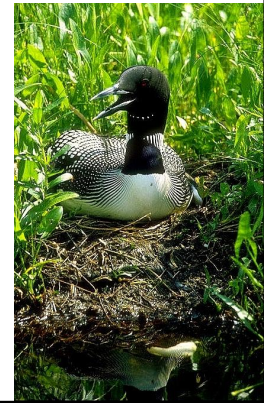


Recreation Impacts: Consequences for Wildlife



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Wildlife Responses to Recreation

Recreationists' Behaviors – most wildlife can tolerate or adapt to repetitive activities that pose no threat. The frequency, type, duration, and timing of recreationists' behaviors are important elements.

Unexpected, loud noises and rapid movements cause the greatest responses.

Travel in the direction of wildlife cause a greater response than travel away from or parallel to wildlife.



Wildlife has a limited ability to adapt to our presence, particularly if all visitors predictably stay on formal trails and campsites and are quiet and non-threatening.

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Wildlife Responses to Recreation

Context of Disturbance – wildlife reactions to recreational disturbances vary by season of year, location, and availability of cover.

Severity of recreational disturbance is greater:

- **In the wintertime when food availability is low and energy expenditures are high,**
- **In seasons when animals are breeding, nesting, birthing, and raising young,**
- **During hunting seasons when animals are more wary.**

The distance you can approach an animal before it flees is termed its “flight distance.” Research has shown that the flight distance of animals can vary substantially among different individuals and even for the same individual due to a variety of factors. Wildlife is particularly sensitive in the wintertime, when nesting or raising young, and during hunting seasons.

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During hunting seasons when animals are more wary.

We are the visitors in their back yard!



Mike Keefe 1995

Remember, we are “visitors” to the public lands. For wildlife these lands are “their” home. Be respectful of wildlife when you visit them in their native habitats.



The Seven Principles of Leave No Trace

- **Plan Ahead and Prepare**
- **Travel & Camp on Durable Surfaces**
- **Dispose of Waste Properly**
- **Leave What You Find**
- **Minimize Campfire Impacts**
- **Respect Wildlife**
- **Be Considerate of Other Visitors**

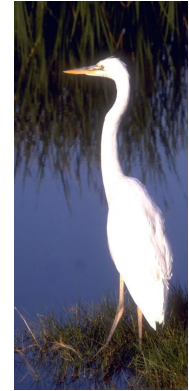


The Leave No Trace program revised the principles in 1999 to devote an entire LNT principle to wildlife protection.

The Seven Principles of Leave No Trace



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- **Respect Wildlife**
- Be Considerate of Other Visitors



Respect Wildlife



Keep wildlife wild. Don't teach them to become beggars.

Never feed wildlife or allow them to obtain human food or trash.



Wildlife attracted to human food often suffer nutritionally and expose themselves to predators and other dangers.

A fed bear is a dead bear. This slogan is true not just for bears because when bears become conditioned to look for human food they become dangerous. Park and forest managers are forced to trap and relocate, and often kill, these animals.

However, this slogan applies equally well to other wildlife. Raccoons, chipmunks, and even mice carry diseases (e.g., Rabies and the deadly Hanta virus). When wild animals lose their fear of humans they can become aggressive and bite in an instant – even when they look cute and friendly.

Sickly aggressive deer in the Grand Canyon were killed and autopsies revealed up to 7 pounds of trash stuck in their intestines!

Respect Wildlife



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Respect Wildlife

Bears that obtain food become “problem bears” that must be relocated or killed.



Protect your food, hang bear bags or use bear-proof food canisters.



It's always a profound shame for recreationists when a "food-attracted" animal has its life disrupted or cut short simply because we fed it or failed to safely store our food.

Even small amounts of food, trash, and food smells can lead wild animals into food-attraction and begging behaviors.

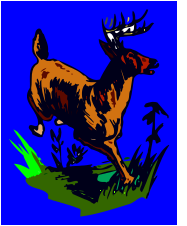
Zero tolerance is the name of the game – wildlife should NEVER obtain even a scrap of human food or garbage.

Respect Wildlife

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Respect Wildlife

Enjoy wildlife at a distance. Use binoculars!

You are too close if your presence causes them to move away.



When wildlife viewing, carry and use binoculars and telephoto lenses.

Pay close attention to the wildlife you are viewing – if your presence or actions is disturbing the animals you are too close.

How do you know you are too close to wildlife?

When it alters its behavior stops what it is doing, looks up, takes flight, etc.

Activity: Rule of thumb



The sign is titled "Respect Wildlife" and features two small icons at the top: a person with binoculars on the left and a horse on the right. The main text reads: "Enjoy wildlife at a distance. Use binoculars!" and "You are too close if your presence causes them to move away." Below the text are three photographs. The first shows a woman in a white shirt and blue pants looking through binoculars. The second shows a white egret standing in a pond. The third shows the same egret in flight, with an arrow pointing from the first photo to the second, indicating the bird's reaction to the viewer's presence.

Respect Wildlife

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You are too close if your presence causes them to move away.

Respect Wildlife

Summary:

- Keep your distance especially during sensitive times of year
- No feeding, either intentionally or unintentionally

Key points to take away from this principle:

- Keep your distance from wildlife
- No feeding, either intentionally or unintentionally

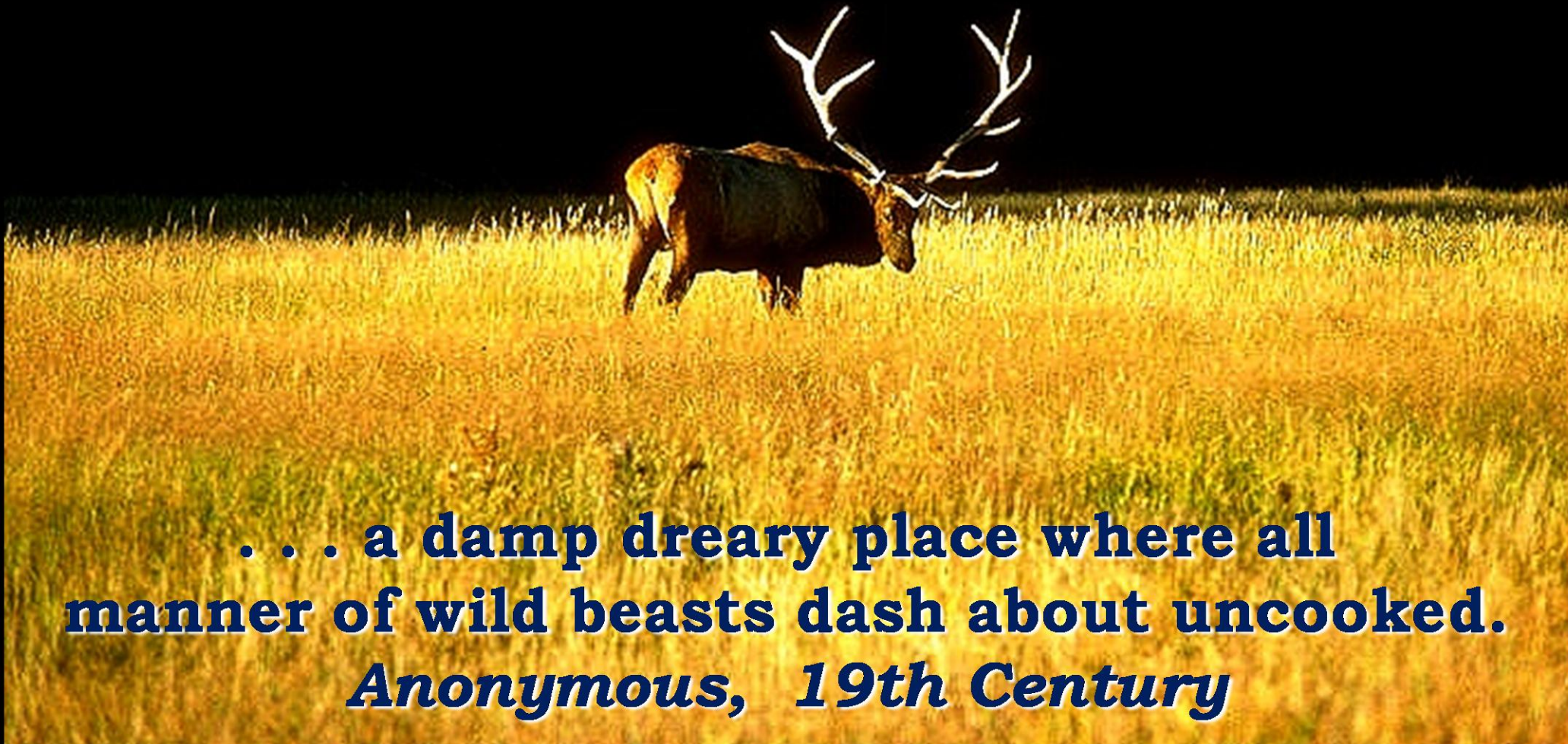
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The End

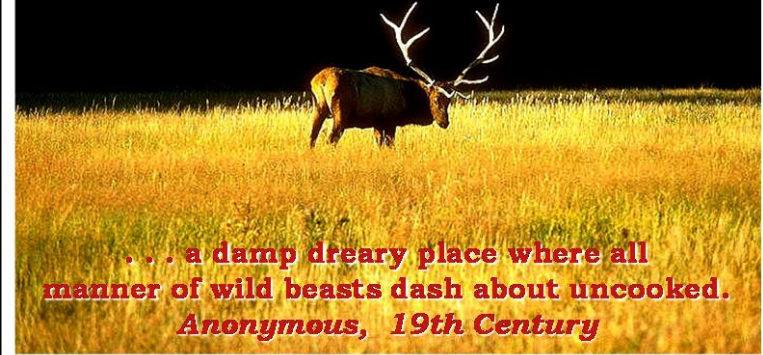
Wilderness is . . .



**. . . a damp dreary place where all
manner of wild beasts dash about uncooked.
*Anonymous, 19th Century***

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