

Meet your wild neighbors...

When you visit a park or open space, you step into the home of a variety of important plants and animals. While you are likely to see small critters like birds, squirrels and insects on the trail, you may also see more elusive and commonly misunderstood creatures, like coyotes, bobcats, mountain lions and snakes.

Wildlife typically avoid humans whenever possible. Most are active around dawn and dusk (**crepuscular**) or night (**nocturnal**). These animals are important to the environment, but sadly they are in danger from habitat loss, climate change and human activity.

There are many steps you can take to help protect local wildlife and keep yourself safe on the trail!



A quick guide to keeping yourself (and wildlife) safe

- **KEEP A RESPECTFUL DISTANCE FROM ALL WILDLIFE**
Never approach, chase or remove any animal from the wild.
- **KEEP WILDLIFE WILD**
Never feed wild animals and take any trash you make with you.
- **MAKE (A LITTLE) NOISE**
Let wildlife know you are there (and give them time to get off the trail) by making a little bit of noise. Talk, use hiking poles, clap or sing a tune. You can also carry a safety whistle for emergencies.
- **BE AWARE OF YOUR SURROUNDINGS**
Stay present, don't wear headphones and scan ahead and behind you regularly. Listen for bird calls, snapping branches or other sounds that alert you to wildlife.
- **THANK YOU FOR PROTECTING AND RESPECTING YOUR WILD NEIGHBORS!**

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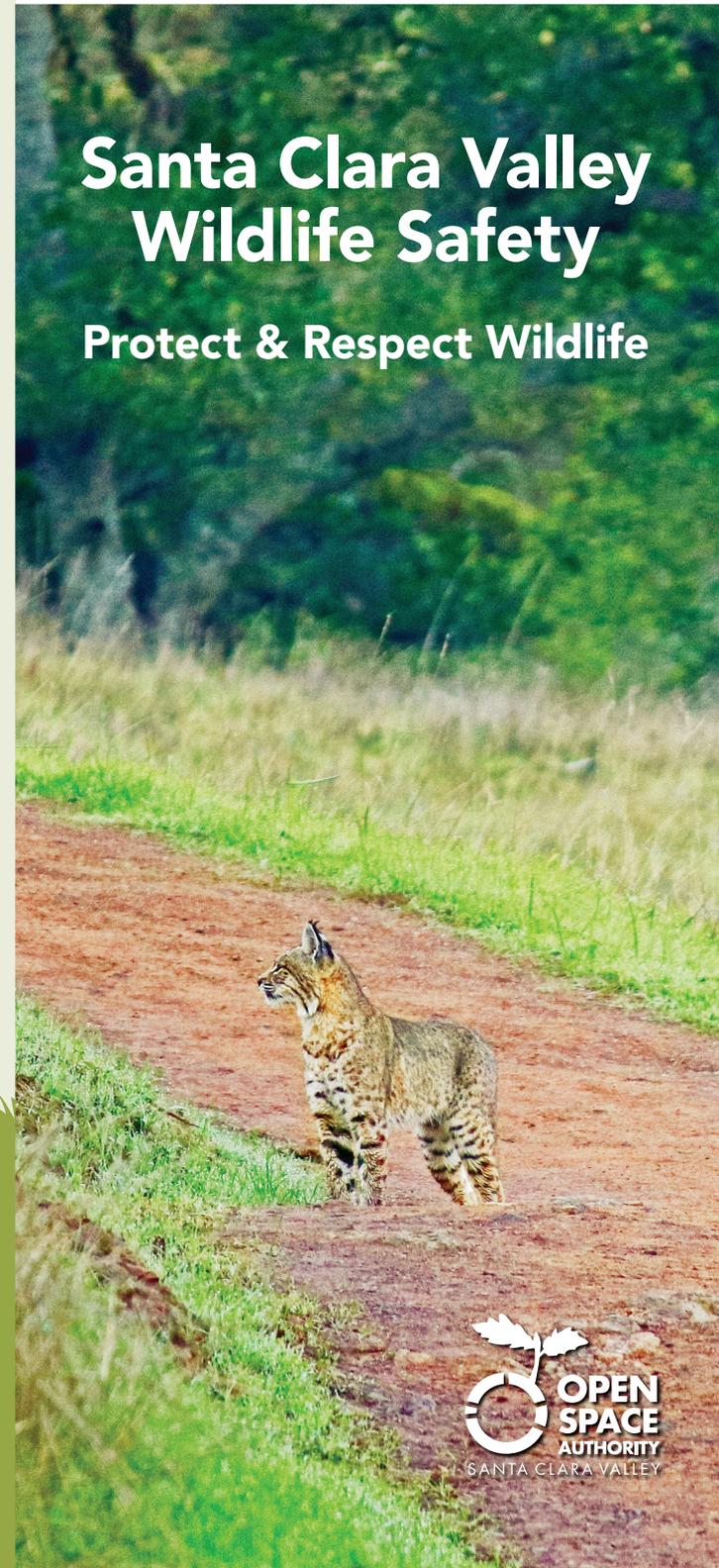
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Santa Clara Valley Wildlife Safety

Protect & Respect Wildlife



Mountain Lion

Description: Large, tan-colored wildcat with long tail.

Size: 7-8 feet long; 60-150+ pounds

Behavior: Solitary; crepuscular and/or nocturnal.

If you see one: Mountain lion sightings are rare. If you see one, back away slowly and do not run, which could trigger a hunting instinct. In the rare event that a mountain lion follows you, make yourself look big, and shout, whistle or make other loud noises. Lift small children off the ground by squatting down while keeping your upper body tall. Do not bend over. If one attacks, defend yourself.



Bobcat

Description: Tan-colored wildcat with dark markings on body and face and a short (bobbed) tail.

Size: 3-4 feet long; 10-40 pounds (about twice the size of a house cat).

Behavior: Solitary and shy; crepuscular.

If you see one: Consider yourself lucky! Bobcats are elusive animals and not known to attack humans. Give it plenty of space, make noise and don't run or turn your back on it.



Coyote

Description: Gray-brown- or tan wild dog with large ears, slender muzzle and big, bushy tail.

Size: 3-4 feet long; 30-50 pounds

Behavior: Lives with other coyotes (in groups called bands); crepuscular.

If you see one: Coyotes are usually fearful of humans. If one shows interest in you or your children, make yourself large by waving your arms, and make noise.



Gray Fox

Description: Small wild dog with salt-and-pepper gray coat, reddish legs and chest and bushy tail with a black tip.

Size: 2.5-3.5 feet long; 8-15 pounds.

Behavior: Solitary; crepuscular and/or nocturnal.

If you see one: Foxes are not much to worry about. They are small, shy of humans and spooked by loud noises.



Ticks

Description: Ticks are small, parasitic invertebrates related to spiders. They feed on blood and live in tall grasses, where they hitch rides on passing animals, including humans. There are many tick-borne illnesses that can be transmitted by tick bites, like Lyme disease.

If you see one: Avoid ticks by staying on trail, avoiding tall grasses, using insect repellent, wearing long sleeves and pants and tucking your pants into your socks. Always inspect your body and clothing after being in areas where ticks may live.



Rattlesnake

Description: Large, thick snake, with a triangular head and olive-green or tan body patterned with dark brown blotches.

Size: 15 - 48 inches long.

Behavior: Like other reptiles, rattlesnakes bask in the sun on warm days. When inactive, rattlesnakes seek cover under rocks and logs and in burrows.

If you see one: Rattlesnakes are venomous and may strike if threatened or attacked. They generally retreat if left alone and will likely move along when they sense footsteps. If you come across a snake on the trail, stop, assess the situation, slowly back away and wait at a safe distance for the snake to leave. Please do not harm snakes – they are important animals!



Feral Pig

Description: Barrel-shaped body with long snout, large tusks and dark, coarse hair.

Size: 3.5-5 feet long; 70-440 pounds.

Behavior: Feral pigs are not native to California, and they often cause damage to the land. They live in large groups, preferring wet areas and thick brush.

If you see one: Feral pigs are shy, but aggressive if approached or surprised. Stay calm, give them space and make noise to scare them away. If you get too close and one charges, climb a tree or rocks, or put something between yourself and the pig.

