

# POTENTIAL WILDLIFE CONFLICTS

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Living in a rural setting affords opportunities that living in more urban settings may not, like the ability to see more wildlife species right in your own backyard. While this experience is most often a welcome one, there are some instances where wildlife can become unwanted guests. Remember that we have chosen to build our homes in wildlife habitat, quite often displacing some animals, while also providing attractive habitats for others. Wildlife species have basic needs like food, water, cover, and space that make up their habitat. You can improve your properties' ability to support wildlife species and prevent wildlife conflicts by planning where you will provide habitat and where you might remove or modify habitat around your home.

## No Feeding Wildlife Law

The root of most human-wildlife conflict is food. Intentionally feeding, attracting or enticing wildlife (except birds and tree squirrels) is considered a petty offense in Pima and Maricopa Counties under the No Feeding Wildlife Law. Violations can result in a fine up to \$300. Even when feeding birds, you can indirectly attract predators. Animals like bears and javelina, may also be attracted by bird seed. Animals like bobcats, raptors, and mountain lions may be indirectly attracted by the increased number of small prey animals (e.g. birds, squirrels, and rodents) that eat the seed. Regardless what attracted these animals, they can create conflict with you and your pets once they begin to associate your property with a food source. Predators will see little difference between the squirrels you are feeding and your pet. Being responsible about bird feeders and potential food attractants (like garbage and pet food) on your property is the best way to prevent conflicts with wildlife.

## Keep wildlife healthy and wild

Follow these tips to keep wildlife from becoming habituated to people and decreasing chances for conflict.



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Discourage predators from becoming comfortable on your property.

- Discourage predators and javelina by scaring them away with vinegar spray, a garden hose, small rocks, noises, or movement.
- Do not intentionally feed wildlife; animals quickly associate food with humans.
- Feed pets indoors or remove leftover food from outdoors immediately.
- Store all garbage securely. Do not discard edible garbage where javelina, skunks, coyotes, and other wildlife species can get to it.
- Keep bird seed and water off the ground and out of reach of wildlife. A platform can be attached to the bottom of most feeders to catch spilled seed. Only put out a quantity of seed that can be consumed by birds in a short period of time. This avoids spillage and excess seed that acts as an attractant to wildlife. Or better yet, plant native vegetation that provides seeds native wildlife can use. For javelina, plant distasteful bulbs such as iris and narcissus instead of tasty bulbs such as tulips.

- Fencing your garden may be necessary to keep out animals such as javelina and rabbits. Poultry wire placed at or just below the soil surface helps protect beds from digging. Remember, prey species such as rabbits and javelina can attract predators like mountain lions.
- To dissuade deer and elk that are attracted to ornamental trees and shrubs, plant shrubby or thorny species or put mesh nylon net fencing around your plants and gardens.
- Shrubbery near your home that provides hiding cover for wildlife should be trimmed up from the ground. However, be mindful of the trade-offs of doing this: you may also be removing cover for species you want to see, like lizards and ground-foraging birds.
- Securely close all openings to spaces under buildings and mobile homes. This is even more critical in the spring when many animals are looking for den sites.
- Supervise your pets outdoors and do not let them roam freely – they may end up as a meal for coyotes, hawks, owls, bobcats, and other predators, or come into conflict with javelina and skunks.
- Keep your pets on a leash whenever they are out of the yard.
- Ask your neighbors to follow these steps (even share this information with them). Javelina, elk, bobcats and coyotes that are attracted to one home often visit neighboring lots.
- Roof outdoor fowl or rabbit enclosures and install double walls to prevent predators from getting at chickens or other small livestock.

Having wildlife species on your property can enhance any rural experience. You can develop areas on your property to be great wildlife habitat, but be responsible and deliberate in the changes you make. By using the above guidelines, you can help wildlife maintain a healthy distance from people. Remember, enjoying wildlife does not mean that you become indifferent to their presence and encourage close contact.

For more information on individual species and how to reduce human-wildlife conflict, see the following resources:

Arizona Game and Fish Department  
Living with Wildlife  
[www.azgfd.gov/w\\_c/urban\\_wildlife.shtml](http://www.azgfd.gov/w_c/urban_wildlife.shtml)

Javelina Resistant Plants  
[ag.arizona.edu/pubs/garden/az1238.pdf](http://ag.arizona.edu/pubs/garden/az1238.pdf)

Fencing for Wildlife  
<http://cals.arizona.edu/pubs/natresources/az1481h.pdf>

Mosquitoes  
<http://ag.arizona.edu/pubs/insects/az1221.pdf>

Bat Management and Control  
<http://cals.arizona.edu/pubs/insects/az1152.pdf>

Termite Control for Homeowners  
<http://cals.arizona.edu/pubs/insects/az1356.pdf>

Information for this fact sheet was taken in large part from the Arizona Game and Fish Department publication *Feeding Wildlife Attracts Predators*. Original publication available at: [http://www.azgfd.gov/pdfs/w\\_c/Urban%20Do%20Not%20Feed.pdf](http://www.azgfd.gov/pdfs/w_c/Urban%20Do%20Not%20Feed.pdf)



Even tall fences won't keep out all predators.

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This information has been reviewed by university faculty.  
[cals.arizona.edu/pubs/natresources/az1481c.pdf](http://cals.arizona.edu/pubs/natresources/az1481c.pdf)

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