

Yellowstone National Park Rules on Visitor Distance from Wildlife

WHAT DOES THE LAW SAY ABOUT INTERACTING WITH WILDLIFE?

National Park rules state that visitors must “remain at least 100 yards (91 meters) from bears or wolves, and at least 25 yards (23 meters) from all other wildlife.” What visitors to the National Parks may not realize is that park regulations have the force of a federal law. That means violating them is a lot more serious than just breaking a rule. A transgression can be punished by a fine, jail time, or both.

<https://www.nps.gov/yell/learn/management/compendium.htm>

from the Superintendent’s Compendium

C16. To protect park wildlife, the following are prohibited:

- (a) Willfully approaching, remaining, viewing or engaging in any activity:
 - (1) Within 25 yards of any wildlife, except bears and wolves or when completely inside a legally positioned motor vehicle.
 - (2) Within 100 yards of bears and wolves, except when completely inside a legally positioned motor vehicle.
 - (3) Within any distance that displaces or interferes with the free unimpeded movement of any wildlife.
 - (4) Within any distance that creates or contributes to a potentially hazardous condition or situation.
 - (5) Failing to remove oneself to prescribed distances during inadvertent, accidental or surprise encounters with wildlife.
- (b) The prohibitions of this section do not apply to someone who is:
 - (1) In compliance with written protocols approved by the Superintendent.
 - (2) In accordance with the terms and conditions of a permit issued by the Superintendent.

Determination: The Superintendent has determined that these public use restrictions and requirements are necessary to maximize public safety, protect wildlife, and provide park staff with the flexibility to situationally manage dynamic, diverse and rapidly evolving wildlife viewing opportunities.

Federal Regulation on Wildlife Protection

https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=81801b3db4ac2206915c6e3def681b6b&mc=true&node=se36.1.2_12&rgn=div8

§2.2 Wildlife protection.

(a) The following are prohibited:

- (1) The taking of wildlife, except by authorized hunting and trapping activities conducted in accordance with paragraph (b) of this section.
- (2) The feeding, touching, teasing, frightening or intentional disturbing of wildlife nesting, breeding or other activities.