

Animal

bites

Blame hunger when wild animal encounters go bad: Some critters want to make a meal of you; others fear it's *you* who wants to eat *them*. Here are the locations on the body where animal attacks most often occur, and how you can protect yourself when wildlife encounters get a little too close.



bears

Targets Scalp, face
Attacks Unknown
Deaths (since 2003) 13 (grizzly); 12 (black)
If a grizzly gets you to the ground, roll onto your stomach, play dead, and protect your head. If it's a black bear, fight like mad.



coyotes

Targets Calves, throat
Attacks 5
Deaths (since 2003) 0
Coyotes go for the legs to down their prey, then they use their jaws to crush the windpipe. Stay upright and balanced by jabbing them with a trekking pole.



alligators

Targets Chest
Attacks 7
Deaths (since 2003) 9
Big gators grab as much meat as they can, but let go about two-thirds of the time. If one bites you, don't just struggle—gouge its eyes.



scorpions

Targets Fingers
Stings (2011) 19,131
Deaths (since 1970) 0
Credit a good antivenin with the absence of fatalities. Scorpions are most active when nighttime temps top 77°F. Shake out gear.



spiders

Targets Arms, legs
Attacks (2011) 3,912
Deaths 0
Black widow, brown recluse, and hobo: Most bites are defensive, but if one happens, put cold compresses on the wound and evac.



ticks

Targets Ankles, knees, groin, armpits, head
Bites (2011) 1,571
Deaths 25 (Lyme disease)
Check bite areas after each hike: Full-grown deer ticks are as tiny as pepper flakes.



snakes

Targets Lower leg
Bites (2011) 3,137
Deaths 2
All snakebites are defensive. Avoid stepping into places you can't see. If bit, stay calm, lower limb below the heart, and evacuate.



wolves

Targets Legs (upper and lower), throat
Attacks 0 (last in 2010)
Deaths (since 2003) 2
Wolf bites are extremely rare, but if one attacks, shove your fist down its throat so the animal can't breathe.



mountain lions

Targets Back of neck
Attacks 6
Deaths (since 2003) 2
If stalked, make yourself look threatening, and throw rocks. If it clamps onto your neck, counterattack its nose, eyes, and neck.

