

Wildlife You May Encounter Walking Your Dog in Austin

Keeping your dog on-leash helps keep them out of contact with wildlife. This could be walking on a park trail or in your neighborhood.

Raccoons are frequently seen in neighborhoods and parks. They are potential rabies carriers and can transmit the disease to humans and dogs. Do not touch a raccoon. Keeping your dog on-leash avoids encounters that could lead to wounds or disease.



Opossums, the only native North American marsupial, are frequently seen in Austin. Their low body temperature means that rabies is rarely found in this species. Keeping your dog on-leash avoids encounters with these beneficial animals. Opossums help rid your neighborhood of pests by eating slugs, snails, insects, ticks, and even small rodents.



Snakes are common in the Austin area. While many are non-venomous, others are venomous and might be seen near trails or in ponds. On trails, keep your dog on-leash to avoid encounters and bites. Take a few minutes to learn about common snakes in our area. If you see a snake, relax and back away slowly, holding your leash close. If you are bitten by a snake that you cannot identify, **call 911**. If the snake is venomous or suspected to be venomous, seek medical attention for you and/or your dog.



Austinites generally love **bats** because they eat insect pests, helping keep the mosquito population under control. And they look pretty cool when they leave their roosts in the evening. But bats are Central Texas's most common carriers of rabies. Do not touch a bat! If your dog bites one on the ground, seek advice from your vet and call 311 to pick up the bat for testing.



Coyotes are common in Austin green spaces. Coyotes alter their behavior to avoid humans. They may be seen during the day depending on the time of year (denning). Coyotes can carry rabies. To avoid conflicts with coyotes when walking, keep your pet on a 6 foot or shorter leash so it doesn't take off and chase the coyote. If an area says "no dogs allowed" do not bring your dog along with you, especially off-leash. Learn more about living with Coyotes: www.austintexas.gov/page/coyotes-central-texas



Call 311 if you see a distressed or injured Raccoon, Opossum, Coyote or Bat or if you come into contact with one. 311 can offer tailored and humane solutions to wildlife issues and/or conflicts.

