



ENCOUNTERING WILD ANIMALS

The aim of these instructions is to give the Park users a set of simple rules to follow in case of an encounter with a wild animal inside the area.

Due to the proximity of SISSA buildings to highly natural woodland, it may sometimes happen that wild animals, such as boars, deer, badgers and snakes, enter the Park area.

Even if not aggressive *per se*, these animals can represent a risk for park users and SISSA employees because of their size and strength, with which they can unintentionally hurt people who inadvertently trigger their self-defense response.

Park users are requested to report any sightings and leave the animals in peace.

For assistance or doubts, contact the Health and Safety Office at 040 3787 **555** or at safety@sisssa.it.

Wild animals can be dangerous in specific conditions:

- When they are hurt
- When they are with their offspring
- When they are eating
- When they get caught off-guard and they are scared
- When they are disturbed in their dens
- In general, when they show confidence towards people.

While some of these situations are clearly recognizable and avoidable even by unexperienced people, in some cases the dangerous situation can be less evident (for example, if you encounter a mother with her offspring, the offspring could be hidden, and the mother could attack you for being too close to them).

The general behavioral rules to adopt in case of an encounter with a wild animal are the following:

- **Do not try to lure the animal closer with food in order to observe it, take photographs or videos.** If the animal gets used to being fed, it can lose its natural fear towards humans, starting a dependency process which is hard to end or contain. This practice is prohibited by law and as such punishable. Do



not insist because the animal may get irritated, especially if there are offspring in the area.

- **Speak loudly, to make the animal notice you and to avoid catching it off-guard.** Usually, this is enough to avoid the encounter altogether because the animal will flee.
- **In case of encounter, keep calm and do not scare the animal by screaming, moving suddenly, or throwing objects. Back off and leave slowly and steadily without turning your back on the animal. Do not run,** it could trigger the chase reflex in the animal.
- **If the animal looks nervous** (pants, moves suddenly, keeps its head down, paws the ground, looks insistently in the direction of the person), **avoid staring at it directly in the eye** (as it represents an act of provocation) **and keep a safe distance, possibly taking a different path.**
- **Always leave an escape path for the animal, do not encircle it and do not corner it.** If the animal feels trapped, it could react aggressively.

Snakes

In SISSA Park it can be possible to encounter snakes of various species, either venomous or not.

In Italy, the only venomous snakes are vipers. In any case, it is preferable to avoid potentially dangerous behaviour with other species too since they can have a painful bite.

Special attention should be paid at the end of Winter, when the snakes come out of hibernation and are still numb or in Spring, during the mating season. In these periods it is more likely to meet them.

It is important to be able to recognize irritation signs: if the snake is kept from fleeing, it could swell its body and hiss loudly. If the alleged aggressor does not stop irritating the snake, it will defend itself by biting.

General behaviour:

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- **Avoid stopping in stony areas, with brushwood, bushes or tall grass, especially when exposed to the sun.**
- If it is not possible to avoid such zones, **make your presence known by making noise** (speak loudly, clap or stomp your feet on the ground) to make any hidden snakes move away.
- Watch carefully where you put hands and feet and do not walk barefoot in the tall grass.
- Do not leave backpacks and bags open and unattended.
- If you spot a snake, stay calm and walk away in a calm way so as not to irritate the animal.

If a snake bites you:

- **Keep calm** to avoid the acceleration of the heartbeat and consequent propagation of possible venom.
- **Disinfect** the bite wound.
- **Bandage** and immobilize the wounded area, without blocking the blood flow.
- **Seek medical help** as soon as possible.

Things to **avoid**:

- Cut or cauterize the wound. It will just make the damaged area bigger.
- Suck on the wounded area. The possible venom would come in contact with the mouth mucosa, which is very permeable to it.
- Give the antivenom serum to the person who was bitten. A medical professional must be present, because the serum may cause a serious allergic reaction.
- Apply a tourniquet.
- Get agitated, perform activities that require physical effort, drink alcohol.

Ticks

Tick bites may transmit pathogens that cause a number of diseases in humans such as Rickettsiosis, Tick Borne Encephalitis (TBE), Lyme disease and Crimea-Congo hemorrhagic fever (CCHF).



Here are some suggestions to avoid tick bites:

- Wear close-toe shoes, long-sleeve shirts and long trousers.
- Wear light-colored clothing, to spot ticks easily.
- Use tick repellent sprays on themselves and on their pets.
- Walk in the center of paths and stay away from tall grass.
- Do not leave bags, backpacks or clothes the ground.
- After any outdoor activity, inspect your clothes and body, focusing especially on armpits, groin area, legs, belly button, neck and head. Do the same with your pets.

If a tick bites you:

- Remove the tick using tweezers, possibly curved, or other dedicated equipment found on the market. Remove it by grabbing the animal as close to the skin as possible, and then pulling while slightly rotating the body of the animal. Avoid squeezing the body of the animal or leaving parts of the body inside the skin. Contact the Health & Safety Office (room 422) to receive help in removing the tick.
- Disinfect the wound with an antiseptic product.
- If in the following days you notice unusual symptoms or skin reactions inform your doctor.

Please remember that there is a vaccine available for TBE.

For more information contact the Health & Safety Office (safety@sisssa.it) or visit the Ministry of Health website: [FAQ - Zecche, come proteggerci \(salute.gov.it\)](https://www.salute.gov.it/FAQ-Zecche-come-proteggersi)

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