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Memorial Day tips for enjoying Arizona's great outdoors

The great weather expected this weekend across Arizona is an open invitation to step out into the state's great outdoors. Between hiking and camping in Arizona State Parks, checking out your favorite fishing hole, or just getting some all-around exercise, there are plenty of opportunities. Just be sure to pack your common sense when you pack your car or bike.

People playing or camping in the quiet remote areas are those most likely to come upon our state's wildlife. In most cases, wild animals do not want anything to do with people. However, if you are camping or picnicking, take care to maintain a clean camp and keep food products securely stored. Animals take advantage of easy pickings, and food is the root source of most human-wildlife conflicts.

Outdoor recreationists are also encouraged to be alert to any wildlife that is acting strangely. While human encounters with rabid animals are uncommon, the state has had an increase in the number of animals with rabies in the last month in Navajo and Gila Counties. Any wildlife that is acting abnormally or any sighting of several dead animals in an area should be reported to the Arizona Game and Fish Department at (602) 942-3000 during business hours (9-5, M-F), or at (623) 236-7201 after hours. If you plan on taking your pet on your outdoor adventures, be sure its vaccinations are up to date and keep it under your control at all times.

Of course, don't forget to take plenty of water and protect yourself from the sun. Arizona's heat may not be out in full force just yet, but you should always carry more water than you think you'll need. Everyone is at risk for skin cancer. You can protect yourself by wearing a hat, sunglasses and sunscreen. Long sleeved shirts and pants can protect you from the sun and mosquitos. If you'll be out at dusk or dawn, wear insect repellent to prevent the spread of West Nile.

[Arizona State Parks'](#) website has a great locator to help you find just the perfect outdoor activity you want to do... whether it is close to your home or a day trip away.

At the [Arizona Game and Fish Department's](#) website, you can find out about where to go fishing, hunting, wildlife viewing, boating or ATV riding, and you can also purchase your hunting or fishing license.

The [Health Services](#) website has information about how to keep yourself healthy and protected while you have fun with your family and friends on the holiday weekend and all summer long.

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