



**CAI – LARGE CARNIVORE GROUP**

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**BEHAVIOURAL  
RULES FOR  
RESPONSIBLE  
HIKERS**



## WHY DOES CAI TAKE CARE OF LARGE CARNIVORES?

Large carnivores are essential components of the Italian alpine ecosystem. That's why CAI pays particular attention on their return and conservation.

It's important that both hikers and people living and working in the mountains have a good knowledge of the species and of the right behaviour to keep in case of encounters with them.

This will provide the opportunity to raise awareness among people and make them capable and more open to a constructive dialogue about this topic based on balanced own position, strong of an objective science-based knowledge.

## GENERAL RULES OF PROPER BEHAVIOUR WHEN VISITING LARGE CARNIVORE COUNTRIES

When hiking, sporadic more or less close encounters with large carnivores may occur. Usually, in these cases, the animal suddenly runs away.

Therefore, considering the three species living in Italy, the lynx, the wolf and the brown bear, close encounters with the latter may be sometimes more risky, especially if involving females with cubs, simply because they are more protective with their litter and, thus, may show aggressive defensive behaviours.

When dealing with wildlife or hiking in large carnivore countries, it is crucial to consider them simply for what they are: wild animals, and to show proper behaviours, respectful of nature and wildlife itself.

### RESPECT WILDLIFE QUIETNESS

Do not force any contact or approach.

### DO NOT LEAVE GARBAGE IN THE WOODS

Take them home with you.

### DO NOT ARRANGE FEEDING SITES

to take photos or to better observe the animals.





## **KEEP YOUR DOG ON A LEASH**

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You will avoid disturbing wildlife or triggering defensive reactions on potential wolves or bears close to you.

*Check the specific national legislation (ordinance, July the 13th 2016, g.u. general series n. 209 of September the 7th: "Dog management rules to prevent aggressions to people and to guarantee the respect of the dog itself".).*

## **DO NOT FOLLOW LARGE CARNIVORE TRACKS**

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If you detect recent tracks of a large carnivore do not follow them. Change your direction in order not to disturb the animal and to avoid any possible close encounter with it.

## **AVOID CLOSE ENCOUNTERS WITH BROWN BEARS AS MUCH AS YOU CAN**

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In areas of assessed stable presence of brown bears make noises, so as to be heard: clap your hands, whistle, cough, speak loudly, especially in dense forests or in spots where the sides of the valleys and/or the slopes change and the visibility decreases.

*For more details, please check the following paragraph.*



## **IN CASE OF CLOSE ENCOUNTERS WITH BROWN BEARS**

### **TAKE YOUR EMOTIONS UNDER CONTROL**

Stay calm and always leave a clear escape route to the animal. If the bear doesn't notice you, step back quietly always watching at it.

### **DO NOT TRY TO FOLLOW OR TO GET CLOSE TO THE BEAR IN ORDER TO PHOTOGRAPH OR BETTER OBSERVE IT**

If it goes away keep calm; if it stays still, back away slowly without turning your back on the bear.

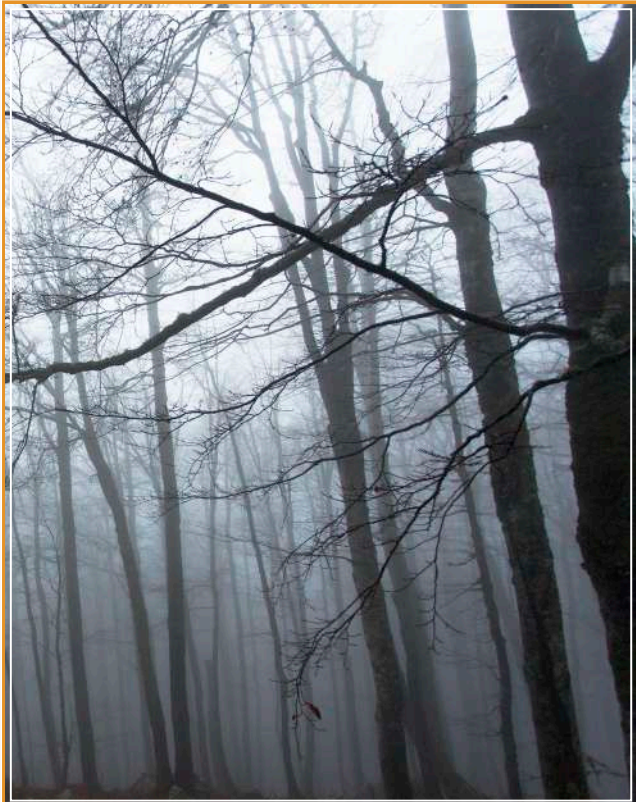


## **NEVER GET CLOSE OR TOUCH BEAR CUBS**

Mother bears can show aggressive behaviours in order to protect their cubs. In case of aggressive behaviours by the bears do not react, stay still and talk low and calmly even if the bear is running towards you.

## **ABSOLUTELY DO NOT RUN**

running may elicit a chase response in the bear.

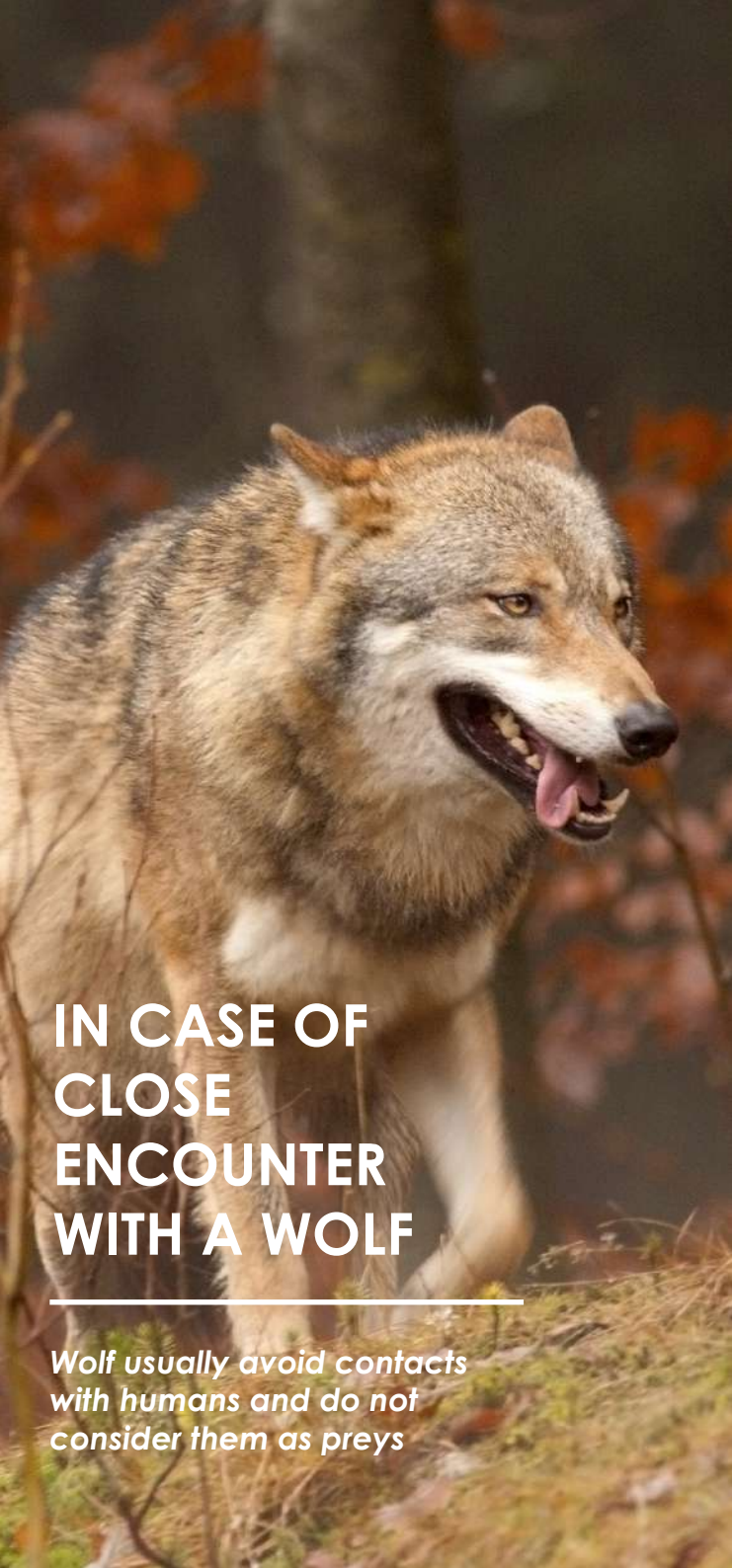


## **DO NOT SCREAM AND AVOID NOISES THAT MAY SCARE THE BEAR**

If the bear stands up on its legs, it's only to identify you.

## **IN CASE OF PHYSICAL CONTACT, DO NOT RUN AWAY**

Do not scream and do not hit the bear but lie on the ground, face-down, with your hands behind your neck and stay still on the ground until the bear goes away. If you wear a backpack keep it on, in order to protect your back.



# IN CASE OF CLOSE ENCOUNTER WITH A WOLF

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*Wolf usually avoid contacts  
with humans and do not  
consider them as preys*





## **STAND STILL IN SILENCE AND AVOID GETTING CLOSE TO THE WOLF**

Generally, the wolf runs away without showing any aggressive behaviour. This is both for lone wolves and for packs. Once it has moved away, do not follow it.

### **IF ITS PRESENCE SCARES YOU,**

make noise with your voice or clap your hands and this will push the wolf to move away.

### **IF YOU SEE A WOLF FROM A DISTANCE,**

stay still in silence without disturbing it and enjoy the rare sighting.

### **IF YOU ENCOUNTER WOLVES WHILE THEY ARE HUNTING OR EATING A PREY,**

absolutely do not interfere in any way, go away in silence!

## **RULES OF PROPER BEHAVIOUR WHEN ENCOUNTERING LIVESTOCK GUARDING DOGS**

Livestock guarding dogs (LGD) are meant to protect livestock from dangers.

They grow with the flock and never leave it. Where flocks are protected by guarding dogs (e.g.: Maremmano-Abruzzese Sheepdog) it's important to be careful and respectful of some elementary rules.



## **DO NOT FREELY CROSS THE FLOCK**

You might scare the animals and alert the dogs. If the dog approaches you barking, stay calm.

If you are on a bike, get off of it and proceed on foot, pushing your bike and interposing it between you and the dog.

## **IF THERE IS A SHEPHERD, SAY HELLO TO HIM**

In this way he can see you and answer you back. This would keep the LGD calm.

## **DO NOT FEED THE DOGS. DO NOT SCREAM, DO NOT MAKE ANY QUICK MOVEMENTS, DO NOT THROW ROCKS TOWARDS THE DOG**

Keep this behaviour towards both the dog approaching you and the flock.

## **AT FIRST, JUST STAY STILL AND TALK IN A SOOTHING VOICE**

Avoid direct eye contact with the guarding dog, to prevent any possible aggressive reaction on the dog. Once understood you are not a threat, the dog will go back to the flock.

## **ALWAYS TRY TO KEEP CALM**

Back away slowly, without turning your back on the dog until it stops barking and never run.

## **IF YOU HAVE YOUR OWN DOG WITH YOU, KEEP IT ON A LEASH**

If you are in a difficult situation, let the dog off the leash, call it back to you and do not pick it up or hold it.

**For additional information, please refer only to official and reliable sources of information. Here below are some examples of useful websites:**

- **[www.wolfalps.eu](http://www.wolfalps.eu)**

Life Wolfalps project website, for the conservation of the wolf in the Alps.

- **[www.medwolf.eu](http://www.medwolf.eu)**

Website of the Life Medwolf project for wolf conservation in the Mediterranean areas, ended in 2017.

- **[www.grandicarnivori.provincia.tn.it](http://www.grandicarnivori.provincia.tn.it)**

Website of the Autonomous Province of Trento about the large carnivore species present in Trentino (brown bear, wolf and lynx).

- **[www.dinalpbear.eu/it/](http://www.dinalpbear.eu/it/)**

Website of the Life Dinalp bear project, for population level management and conservation of brown bears in the northern Dinaric Mountains and in the south-eastern Alps, ended in 2019.

- **[www.salviamolorso.it](http://www.salviamolorso.it)**

Website of the NGO "Salviamo l'Orso", acting for the protection and conservation of the Marsican brown bear in the Apennines of Italy.

- **<https://www.lifelynx.eu/>**

Life Lynx Project Website. Project aiming at preventing the extinction of the Dinaric/South Eastern Alpine lynx population through reinforcement and long-term conservation (linked to the Progetto Lince Italia).

**TO LEARN MORE ABOUT LIVESTOCK PROTECTION AND PREVENTIVE MEASURES, EVEN FROM THE VOICE OF FARMERS:**

- **[www.difesattiva.info](http://www.difesattiva.info)**

Website of Difesattiva, an Association of breeders who use proper preventive measures to protect their livestock from wolves and wild canids attacks.

- **[www.protezionebestiame.it](http://www.protezionebestiame.it)**

Information on proper procedures and prevention measures for an appropriate livestock custody.

**[www.pasturs.org](http://www.pasturs.org)**

Pastur Project Website, to promote large carnivores – farmers coexistence.

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