

## 6. Stealth

If you're like most people who love the outdoors, you love seeing wild animals.

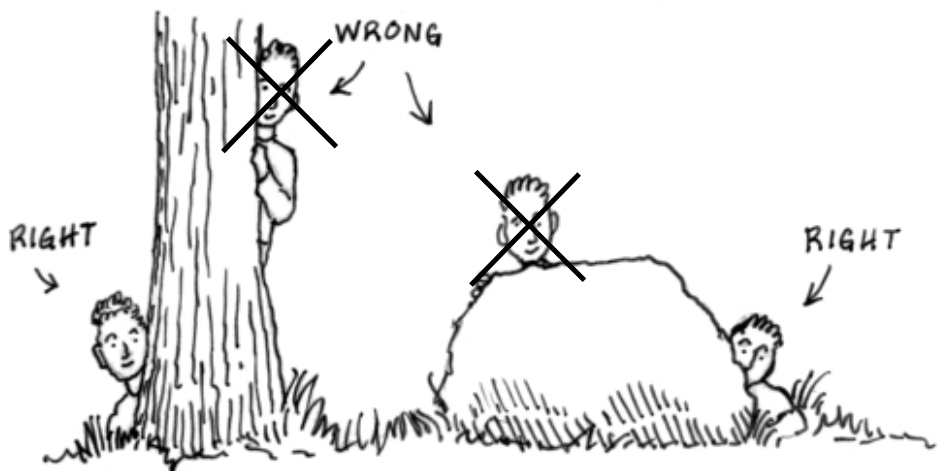
If you want to see wild animals up close, you want to learn STEALTH—how to get close to animals without scaring them away. Stealth means staying out of sight, and staying quiet.

### Learn How To Stay Out of Sight

When you stand in the middle of a field, you're much easier to see than when you stand near trees, bushes, or other cover.

If you stick your head up where it's easy to see, you may scare the animal away. So it's usually best to stay low.

Sudden movements can also scare animals. It's best to move slowly.



## A Game: Camouflage

This game is best played in the woods. One person is the “It.” The other players line up about fifty feet away. “It” closes their eyes and counts aloud to ten (or some other number you all agree on). While “It” has their eyes closed, the other players move closer to “It.” The other players must find a place to hide before “It” opens their eyes. If “It” sees them, they have to go back to the start and try again. First person to tag “It” becomes the next “It.”

There are many variations of this game, but these are the most basic rules.

## Learn How To Freeze

What happens if you come upon an animal suddenly, when you weren’t expecting it? If you keep moving, if you make any noise, you’ll scare the animal away.

So learn how to FREEZE. When you learn how to freeze, you can stand perfectly still at a moment’s notice—that way the animal won’t see even the slightest movement.

## A Game: Cautious Coyote

One person is the “Coyote.” The other players line up about fifty feet away, and try to sneak up and tag the Coyote.

The Coyote turns their back to the other players and counts to three slowly (like this: “one thousand and one, one thousand and two, one thousand and three”). After counting to three slowly, the Coyote may turn around at any time.

While the Coyote’s back is turned, the other players sneak forward—and freeze as soon as the Coyote turns around. If the Coyote sees any player move, the Coyote calls out that player’s name, and then that player has to go back to the start.

First person to tag the Coyote wins.

## Learn How To Be Silent

Many animals have very good hearing. The slightest noise by a human, and they will run away. If you’re talking with your friends, animals will hear you long before you see them—and then run away before you see them, too! If you walk loudly, scuffing your feet, they will hear you before you see them—and run away.

Learn how to walk softly and silently. Learn how to walk without talking, at least some of the time, so you have a better chance of seeing animals.

## A Game: Wary Wolf

One person is the Wolf. The Wolf is blindfolded, and sits guarding three large foam balls (without touching the balls).

The other players form a circle about a hundred feet across. They try to sneak up to the Wolf, steal a foam ball, and take it back to the starting place without being heard.

If the Wolf hears someone, they clap their hands and point to where they heard something. If the Wolf points to one of the players, that player has to go back to the start. First person to get a foam ball back to the start wins.

### Be Stealthy and Responsible

Pretty soon, you will get very good at being stealthy. But just because you can sneak up on animals without being seen or heard, doesn't mean you should do it all the time.

If you're watching an animal and you sense that the animal is becoming upset or scared, just walk away.

If an animal is nesting, or taking care of babies, don't try to sneak up on them. You could scare the babies badly. Besides, if the parent catches sight of you, they might get angry at you—you don't want that.

Stay well away from animals with babies, and stay well away from frightened animals. Instead of trying to sneak up on them, watch them through binoculars.