



# Dogs in Canberra Nature Park

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## ABOUT CANBERRA NATURE PARK

Canberra is a unique Australian city in that its urban areas are interspersed with many natural areas. These reserves, which are part of Canberra Nature Park, are refuges for native wildlife and their habitats. They also provide opportunities for recreation virtually on your doorstep. All visitors to Canberra Nature Park, including dog owners, have a responsibility to look after these precious community assets by following park regulations.

## YOUR DOG IN CANBERRA NATURE PARK

**Keep your dog on a lead at all times.** This ensures you, your dog, other park users and the wildlife stay safe.

**Pick up after your dog.** Dog droppings carry disease and are unsightly. Always carry a plastic bag to dispose of them at home.

Parks, Conservation and Lands Rangers regularly patrol reserves and may issue warnings or fines to the owners of dogs found off leads in Canberra Nature Parks. Remember some Canberra Nature Parks are prohibited areas eg. Black Mountain, Gungahlin Grasslands, Mulligans Flat and Goorooyarroo.

Fines May Include:

- \$150 for dogs in prohibited areas.
- \$150 for dogs found off leash in Canberra Nature Park

## YOUR DOG AND WILDLIFE

### Kangaroos

The kangaroos and wallabies that live in Canberra Nature Park are generally quiet and cryptic, but are easily alarmed by a dog in the vicinity. Harassment by dogs can trigger mobs of frightened kangaroos to take to

flight in the direction of nearby roads resulting in motor accidents. Stressed and disoriented kangaroos can also end up in suburban backyards where they can damage property and injure themselves.

Some kangaroos, especially large male animals, will defend themselves, their offspring or their mates against dogs that harass them. There have been cases where kangaroos have fatally injured dogs in such situations.

### Snakes

From early spring to mid autumn, snakes are active in Canberra Nature Park looking for food, water and mating opportunities.

Most snakes move quickly away from humans and dogs but can become extremely aggressive when cornered or harassed. Brown Snakes may give aggressive warnings before a strike, allowing time for a threat to move away, but most dogs tend to ignore the warning. A dog will find a snake well before you do, and often you may not even be aware that your dog has been bitten. Dogs dying from snakebite is a common occurrence.



## Other Reptiles

Slow-moving animals such as Bluetongue and Shingleback lizards are common in some Canberra Nature Parks and are most active during warmer months.

Although these lizards display aggressively, and can inflict a painful bite, mauling by a dog will generally lead to death of these animals.



## YOUR DOG AND OTHER PEOPLE

Besides dog owners, there are many other people who visit nature reserves to walk, jog, horse-ride cycle, take part in conservation work and enjoy nature.

Not everyone loves your dog as much as you do so keep it on a lead at all times. Some people are frightened by uncontrolled dogs, and are offended by faeces left in reserves. Uncontrolled dogs may cause also accidents if they surprise or harass horse riders or bicycle riders.

## YOUR DOG AND DISEASE

Your dog and its faeces can introduce unfamiliar and potentially harmful bacteria into native wildlife and other dogs. Diseases such as Canine HIV and Parvovirus may be transmitted between greeting dogs.

Kangaroo carcasses harbour diseases that can be passed on to your dog and transmitted to you or your family. Dogs not on a lead will be attracted to a carcass and can inhale eggs, spores or bacteria that carry some of these diseases, from up to a metre away from the carcass.

Such diseases include:

- **Hydatids**—a common parasitic disease of stock and kangaroos and present in carcasses and faeces of infected animals.
- **Tapeworms and other worms**—can easily infect dogs and can be passed on to humans.
- **Toxoplasmosis**—is generally carried by cats, and is transmitted via faeces.
- **Salmonella**—can be present in reptiles but also in animal carcasses.

## YOUR DOG AND POISONS

Control of vertebrate pests such as foxes in Canberra Nature Park often involves laying poison baits. Notification of such will be signposted on entry points to the reserve. Although baits are laid underground, foxes will often dig them up and discard them. Dogs are also able to find and excavate the baits. If a domestic dog finds and consumes a 1080 bait, it will probably die.

### FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Phone Canberra Connect on 13 22 81

There are places where you can exercise your dog off lead in a nature park including Point Hut and Uriarra which are part of Murrumbidgee River Corridor.

For designated dog exercise area maps (off lead) visit:

[www.parksandplaces.act.gov.au](http://www.parksandplaces.act.gov.au) or

[www.domesticanimals.act.gov.au](http://www.domesticanimals.act.gov.au)