

You, Your Dog, and Environmentally Significant Areas (ESAs)



A guide to help you and your dog enjoy—and protect—nature in London

Environmentally Significant Areas (ESAs) are designed to preserve and protect nature by minimizing human and pet disturbance to rare and endangered plants and animals and significant natural features

Dog walking is allowed in ESAs, but for the safety of visitors and your pet:

- Keep your dog on a leash and under control at all times.
- Stay on marked trails to minimize the impacts to our environment.
- please remember to dispose of all pet waste in garbage bins. Help to keep it safe and clean for everyone!
- There are natural risks to your pet from steep drops, encounters with wildlife and being in unfamiliar surroundings with new smells.
- Be aware that there are diseases which naturally affect our native wildlife and can pose a risk to dogs.
- Your dog may be friendly, but not all visitors like dogs and some may be afraid of them. Please be respectful of fellow visitors.

An ESA is not a Park

Parks are designed for recreation. You and your leashed dog can play and wander much more freely in a park than in an ESA. London also has dog parks specially designated for your dog to roam and play off leash. See **More Information** section for locations and by-laws.

Picture of an ESA entrance (with sign)

Wild animals

Some animals can seriously harm or kill your dog, especially when he's off-leash:

- **Coyote**—an off-leash dog is more likely to encounter a coyote. Coyotes are more afraid of people than dogs.
- **Raccoon**—well-armed with teeth and claws and not afraid to use them when cornered by any dog —no matter how large
- **Skunk** —need we mention the smell – and the difficulty of its removal?)

Any animal - no matter its size - can scratch or bite your dog in self-defense. Even minor bites or scratches can transmit serious infections to your dog and lead to a large veterinary bill.

Even if your dog “wins” in an encounter with a wild animal, your dog may injure or kill a bird or animal that the ESA was designed to protect.

The mere presence of your dog can affect the feeding, mating, or nesting of rare and endangered birds and animals.



Coyote (note long bushy tail)

Poisonous Plants

Many wild plants can also harm or kill your dog.

Milkweed is found in some natural areas in London, such as ESAs. Milkweed is prized for its role in providing food for the endangered monarch butterfly. Milkweed contains several **poisons** that can seriously harm or kill your dog.



Many other plants in ESAs can seriously sicken or kill your dog. These include:

Poison oak	Poison ivy
Poison sumac	Foxglove
Dogbane	Castor bean
Giant hogweed	Bloodroot
Thorn apple (jimsonweed)	Yew
Many mushrooms	

Even if your dog does not get sick or injured by running, rolling, or digging through plants, rare or endangered plant species may be damaged.

Need More Information?

City of London, City Planning
519-661-4980
www.london.ca

Upper Thames River Conservation
Authority (UTCRA)
519-451-2800 ext. 281
www.thamesriver.on.ca

London Animal Care Centre
519-685-1330
www.accpets.ca

There are 11 ESAs in London, please see:
www.london.ca/ESA

The City of London also operates 5 Off leash
dog parks
[www.london.ca/residents/Parks/Explore-
Parks/Pages/Off-Leash-Dog-Parks.aspx](http://www.london.ca/residents/Parks/Explore-Parks/Pages/Off-Leash-Dog-Parks.aspx)