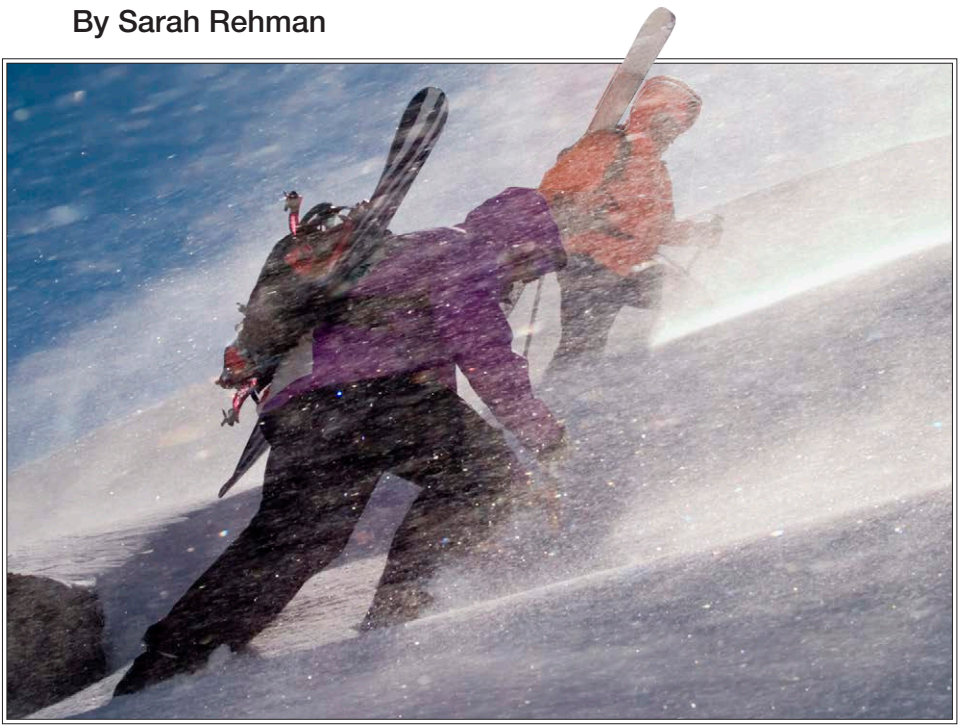
Extreme Survival

When a fun day takes a disastrous turn, follow these tips. Your life may depend on it!

By Sarah Rehman



Being stranded in a blizzard can be life threatening if you don't know what to do.

Experiencing nature is a fun pastime for many people. However, nature can be unpredictable—and sometimes, dangerous. So, what happens when disaster strikes? From sudden blizzards to elephant stampedes, read on to learn about some extreme scenarios, and discover what you can do to protect yourself.

Blizzards

Imagine that you're snowboarding, and you veer off course. You don't recognize where you are. Night is rapidly approaching, and the gentle snow that's been falling all day has suddenly turned into a furious blizzard. What do you do?

Your first instinct may be to keep going until you find your way back. However, a blizzard's strong, freezing winds can be deadly if you're out too long. "Trying to battle the elements is one of the biggest reasons people die," says Bear Grylls, host of a popular survival show.

Instead of pushing through the storm, Grylls suggests creating a shelter by digging a hole in a pile of snow. "Make it just big enough to fit your body into. Once you're in, pull any loose blocks of snow around the opening to help keep out the freezing cold wind." When the blizzard is over and the morning comes, you can climb out of your snow hole and head to safety.

Killer Bee Attacks

Imagine you are hiking, and you come across a beehive. You get too close, and suddenly a swarm of killer bees starts racing toward you. Just how dangerous is this situation?

During a bee attack, the insect releases its stinger into a person's skin. The stinger contains a poisonous substance called venom. If a person isn't allergic to the venom, one sting is not enough to cause serious harm. However, killer bees attack in large swarms, so it's more likely that a person will suffer hundreds of stings—and that can be deadly to anyone.

Killer bees, shown here, attack in large groups called swarms.

So how do you avoid an attack? Most people think that swatting at the bees will make them go away, but this motion only makes them angrier. The best thing to do is to run away—fast! "Leaving immediately tells them that you are not a threat," says biologist Jesus Rivas.

Once you're about 900 feet from the hive, you should be safe. If you did get stung along the way, seek medical help immediately.

Desert Dehydration

Imagine you're exploring a vast desert while on vacation. You wander so far from your tour

group that you end up getting lost. How will you survive?

The desert is a dangerous place. The sun's scorching rays and dry heat can easily dehydrate a person—and that's a huge problem. Although human beings can survive about three weeks without food, they can last only about three days without water!

So, your first mission is to search for a water source. "Look for birds and insects," suggests Tony Nester, a survival expert. These creatures need water to survive. Follow them, and you might be led to a water source.

If that doesn't work, collect and bury some stones. They will cool down in the sand overnight. In the morning, before the sun rises, dig out the stones. You'll find drops of dew on them. Lick the dew off the rocks.

Elephant Stampede

Imagine you are at an elephant sanctuary. You come across a group of wild elephants. You go in for a closer look, when suddenly, the elephants start charging at you!

Elephants are usually gentle creatures that avoid people. But if a human gets too close, the elephants may feel like they're in danger and charge at the threat. So, is there anything you can do at this point?

According to Matt Maltby, an elephant specialist, "if you find yourself in this highly dangerous situation, try to put as much distance between yourself and the elephant." If the elephant still charges toward you, Maltby suggests "running down a steep hill." Why? When it comes to hills, elephants tend to avoid them because they hate climbing back up!

Although it's always good to know what to do in this kind of situation—or any of those described in this article—prevention is the best policy. "Be careful!" exclaims Maltby.

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