

# COUGAR FACTS

www.cougarfund.org

## Cougar Facts

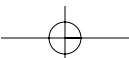
**Average Weight: Males, 140 pounds; Females, 90 pounds**

**Life Span: 8 to 12 years in the wild**

**Average Length: 7 feet from nose to tip of tail (tail is nearly as long as the body)**

- 🐾 Cougars are also known as: Mountain Lion, Panther, Puma, Catamount, Painter, Ghost Cat. Latin Name: Puma Concolor or “Cat of One Color”.
- 🐾 Cougars were once found in all 48 contiguous United States. Viable populations are now recognized in just 15 states: AZ, CA, CO, FL, ID, MT, ND, NM, NV, OR, SD, TX, UT, WA and WY.
- 🐾 Cougars are extremely adaptable and have one of the greatest distributions of any terrestrial mammal in the Western Hemisphere. They make their home in deserts, swamps, grasslands, sub-alpine mountains and tropical rainforests.
- 🐾 A single cougar requires a minimum of 50 – 100 square miles to breed, raise young, hunt and survive. Home ranges vary in size according to season, habitat quality and prey availability, with male territories larger than those of females.
- 🐾 By nature, mountain lions are elusive and reclusive, preferring to avoid contact with humans at all costs. They even avoid other cougars, except at mating season.
- 🐾 Although cougars are similar in color to African lions, cougars do not form prides, hunt in a group or share their prey.
- 🐾 Cougars, with few natural predators, keep their numbers in check through an intricate social system, a hierarchy that involves intense competition in the wild.
- 🐾 Female cougars are pregnant or raising dependent kittens for more than 73% of their lives.
- 🐾 Following a 95-day gestation period, female cougars can produce up to six kittens weighing between one to two pounds. Kittens are born with blue eyes and have blackish-brown spots and a dark-ringed tail. The spots begin to fade at three months old and disappear entirely after one year.

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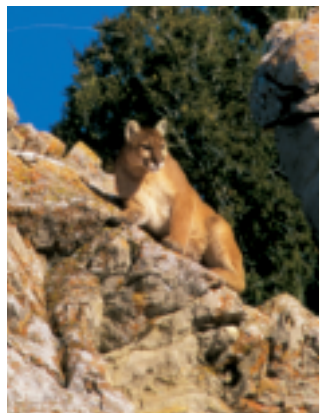




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- ❧ Cougar kittens rely completely on their mothers until they are 18–24 months old. Cougar mothers teach vital hunting skills and how to select prey appropriately during that time. Young cougars reach adult size between 3–5 years old.
- ❧ Cougars are obligate carnivores. Depending on habitat, the primary diet for cougars consists of deer, elk, turkey, rabbits, porcupines, coyote and numerous other small mammals.
- ❧ Cougars have highly developed sight. They have both diurnal and nocturnal vision so prefer low-lit times of day, such as dusk and dawn, to hunt and travel.
- ❧ To prevent other animals from scavenging their kills, cougars often bury the carcass of a recent kill with sticks and leaves, which enables them to feed on the remains for several days.
- ❧ Cougars are able to jump up to 30 feet in distance, 18 feet in height and reach speeds of 50 mph at a sprint.
- ❧ The fur of an adult cougar most commonly appears in a tawny golden color, but may also appear to be gray, dark brown or even cinnamon-colored.
- ❧ Although capable of many vocalizations, cougars cannot roar but do make sounds such as low pitched hisses, growls, purrs, chirps and peeps.
- ❧ Studies have proven that sport hunting does not increase human safety.
- ❧ The greatest cause of mortality amongst cougars is human-related. This includes illegal poaching, auto-related deaths, sport and depredation hunting, lethal removal of problematic cougars and the orphaning and often subsequent death by starvation, exposure and predation of cubs when their mother is killed by any of the above causes.



# COUGAR SAFETY TIPS

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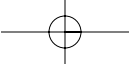
## Safety in Cougar Country

### Preventative Actions

- 🐾 Be aware of your surroundings and recreate responsibly. Consider hiking, biking and running with others.
- 🐾 Supervise children and do not leave them unattended, especially at dawn or dusk.
- 🐾 Keep all garbage, pet food or food scraps indoors to avoid attracting prey.
- 🐾 Keep pets and livestock in a secure area, especially at night.
- 🐾 Install outdoor lighting where you walk after dark or install motion activated lighting.
- 🐾 Seal off crawl spaces under deck areas to discourage cougars or other animals from bedding down under your home.
- 🐾 Do not feed wildlife. Predators follow Prey!
- 🐾 Minimize vegetation in your yard where a cougar could hide and avoid planting foliage that attract prey.
- 🐾 Never approach a cougar!

### Encountering a Cougar

- 🐾 Stay calm and back away slowly. Do not turn your back, run or bend over.
- 🐾 Avoid looking like prey. Try to make yourself appear as big as possible, make eye contact, open your jacket, raise your arms. Talk or sing to distinguish yourself as non-prey species.
- 🐾 If a lion is aggressive, throw rocks and sticks, yell as loud as you can. Always fight back and do not play dead.



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