

## Why protect the mountain lion?

The value of wildlife is often misunderstood. Mountain lions fill an irreplaceable and complex role on the American landscape. They keep deer and elk herds on the move so that they do not overgraze in any particular area. This results in less erosion along riverbanks and increases habitat for other species. Ecosystems with lions are healthier, more sustainable, and contain rich resources, benefiting people and wildlife alike.

Although many Americans believe that the number of mountain lions in the U.S. is increasing, this is not true. Habitat destruction and trophy hunting kill more lions today than at any other time in our nation's history.

Trophy hunters will tell you that hunting is a necessary "management" tool. That's a lie told by people who just enjoy senseless killing. The truth is that mountain lions are few in number and reproduce slowly. Their populations are self-regulating.

California has more people and more mountain lions than any other state, and has not had a lion hunting season since 1972. Yet attacks on people, pets, and livestock are still rare, and there are plenty of deer to go around. California's lions are able to teach their kittens how to avoid people. As a result, conflicts with lions in California are less frequent than in states where lions are hunted for sport.

There is simply no good reason to hunt mountain lions!

## Help Save America's Lion

Together, we can create effective barriers between people and wildlife that serve both. The best way to help save America's lions is to protect people, pets, and livestock and thus reduce the irrational fear of lions. Individuals and neighborhoods can show commitment and responsibility. While some people may be tolerant of nearby wildlife, often their neighbors are not. It takes just one complaint to kill a lion.

Mountain lions need human friends to show that we can coexist. Please, speak with your local lawmakers and comment on wildlife agency plans. Insist on real conservation for the lions in your state. You have an opportunity to undo more than a century's worth of environmental damage and restore natural ecosystems.

Please take this opportunity to learn about lions and visit [www.mountainlion.org](http://www.mountainlion.org) for even more information. Then pass on the word to friends, family and neighbors. Remember that you are the voice of the mountain lion!

## Join Us



Founded in 1986, the Mountain Lion Foundation is a national nonprofit organization protecting mountain lions and their habitat. Your membership makes you part of a nationwide network of individuals who commit dollars and energy to the cause of protecting our nation's most significant remaining predator.

With the help of tens of thousands of concerned individuals, MLF has worked to prevent the killing of mountain lions, curb poaching, increase funding for wildlife habitat, reform game commissions and agencies, and create a new generation of grassroots wildlife activists.

The lion is the guardian of American wilderness. Though rarely seen, mountain lions help to maintain the wild spaces you know and love. Join MLF today in this fight to preserve our nation's wild heritage by Saving America's Lion.



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# MOUNTAIN LION FOUNDATION



Saving  
America's Lion

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[info@mountainlion.org](mailto:info@mountainlion.org)  
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Although its scientific name is *Puma concolor*, the American lion is known by more names than any other animal in the world. You might know it as a mountain lion, cougar, panther, puma, painter or catamount.

## Appearance

The adult American lion is tan in color, with black tipped ears and tail. It weighs 80 to 180 pounds, stands two to three feet high at the shoulders, and can reach eight feet in length from the nose to the tip of the tail. The lion's tail measures one-third of the cat's entire length.

Mountain lion kittens (or cubs) are born with camouflaging spots that fade in maturity. Lions may bear up to four kittens at a time. Kittens stay with their mother for up to two years and then disperse to establish their own territories.

## Abilities

Mountain lions can:

- ◆ bound up to 40 feet running
- ◆ leap 15 feet up a tree
- ◆ climb over a 12 foot fence
- ◆ walk many miles at 10 mph
- ◆ reach speeds of 50 mph in a sprint

Lions sense movement more accurately than they see detail. Their wide angle and night vision are much greater than our own. A lion's hearing is acutely sensitive, discerning sounds far beyond human range.



Mountain lions once occupied the entire United States from coast to coast, but now are primarily found in the West, with a small population in Florida.

## Safety

If you live, work, or play in lion country, be alert. Avoid walking alone between dusk and dawn when lions are most active. Keep your children and pets close to you. Never approach or corner a lion (or any wild animal).

If you do see a mountain lion, no matter how thrilled you are to be one of the very few who gets such an opportunity, stay well back, and take the encounter seriously.



**Make yourself appear as large as possible.**



**Make noise.**



**Maintain eye contact.**



**Slowly create distance.**



**Protect yourself.**

## Home Range

Lions prefer areas with dense undergrowth and cover, and will leave an area if they perceive a threat. Found in deserts to humid coast forests, arid hillsides, scrub and oak woodlands, lions can live from sea level to snow-covered mountain peaks.

Lions are solitary unless mating or parenting, and maintain vast territories that average 100 square miles in size. They are constantly on the move and will fight other lions, even to the death, to protect their territory. A mother with kittens will move to a new den site within her territory every few weeks to protect her kittens.

## Hunting

Mountain lions typically hunt alone from dusk to dawn, taking their prey (primarily deer) by surprise. On average, a lion will kill a deer every ten to fourteen days. Lions also dine on raccoons, rodents, elk, feral hogs, and even porcupines. They may drag the meal to another area and cover it with dry leaves, grass or pine needles to protect the food from other animals and to reduce spoilage.

Human encounters with mountain lions are extremely rare and the risk of injury or death from an attack is very small. You are more likely to drown in your bathtub, be killed by a pet dog, or be hit by lightning than to be attacked by a mountain lion. If lions had any natural urge to hunt people there would be attacks every single day. Instead, they avoid us or are simply indifferent.

Changing our animal husbandry practices can reduce risks. Most pets and livestock do not have the skills to protect themselves and can attract lions and other wild predators. Depredation is still a fairly rare occurrence, and the dangers can easily be avoided by people taking the steps to protect their domestic animals in lion country.

Government policies can also increase conflicts. States that allow mountain lion hunting put their citizens at risk because killing off large adult lions leaves behind juvenile lions that are far more likely to cause trouble. The continuing fragmentation and destruction of habitat and wildlife corridors also increases the chances for encounters with people.

## Identifying Lion Tracks

Lions have an "M" shaped pad with three lobes on the heel, and without claw marks. At a walk, a lion's hind foot steps in his fore track, creating overlap.

### MOUNTAIN LION



Right Front

Left Hind



STRIDE 20-28 INCHES

### DOG

