

COUGARS



THE NORTH SHORE IS COUGAR COUNTRY

Cougars are the largest wild cats in Canada. Approximately 3,500 cougars live in BC. Almost a quarter of that population reside on Vancouver Island. Extremely elusive, encounters between cougars and humans are incredibly rare. Cougars have survived by being predominantly nocturnal, but they can be active at any time of day, throughout all seasons.

Most urban sightings involve young cougars who have recently been dispersed, or old or injured cougars who struggle to hunt in the wild.

Cougar attacks on people are exceptionally rare. To reduce risk, avoid hiking alone. Keep children in sight. Avoid hiking between dusk and dawn. Keep dogs on-leash. Over half of all negative wildlife encounters involve off-leash dogs.

IF YOU MEET A COUGAR

Stay calm. Keep the cougar in sight, maintain eye contact

Pick up small children or pets

Make yourself look big. Let the cougar know you aren't prey

Speak to the cougar in a loud, firm voice

Without crouching for long, arm yourself with rocks/sticks/bear spray

Back away slowly. Fast movements could trigger a natural chase response

If the cougar makes contact, fight back. Focus your attack on their eyes and face

WHAT COUGARS EAT

Cougars are obligate carnivores and the top predator in our forests. A cougar's main prey is deer. An adult cat consumes one deer every 9-14 days. Cougars also eat coyotes, black bear cubs, snowshoe hares, rabbits, raccoons, rodents and occasionally pets.

Cougars will travel extensively in search of food and have large home ranges. Occasionally, they may appear in an urban environment. Make sure they don't find a food source in your yard that may encourage them to stay.

- Keep cats and small unattended dogs inside, especially at night
- Feed your pets indoors
- Bird seed attracts rats, which in turn can attract cougars and other predators that prey on the rodents
- Never feed any wildlife. Attracting prey species, such as deer and raccoons to the neighbourhood will greatly increase the chances of urban encounters with cougars
- Use electric fencing if you keep livestock such as chicken



COUGAR CUBS STAY WITH THEIR MOTHER FOR TWO YEARS. THEY ARE BORN BLIND AND WITH SPOTS TO HELP KEEP THEM HIDDEN WHILST THEIR MOTHER FINDS FOOD

IN THE UNLIKELY EVENT THAT YOU FIND A COUGAR CUB, LEAVE THE AREA IMMEDIATELY