

BIG CATS: COUGARS



WHAT TO DO IF YOU ENCOUNTER A COUGAR

Cougars (also known as a mountain lion, panther or puma) are the largest of the three wild cats in Canada. Extremely elusive, encounters between cougars and humans are incredibly rare. Most urban encounters involve young cougars who are still learning to hunt, or old or injured cougars who can no longer hunt in the wild.

Cougar attacks on people are exceptionally rare. Avoid hiking alone and ensure children are close and in sight. Keep dogs on leash.

IF YOU MEET A COUGAR

- Stay calm and keep the cougar in sight
- Pick up small children or pets
- Speak to the cougar in a loud, firm voice
- Make yourself look big. Let the cougar know you aren't prey
- Without crouching for too long, arm yourself with rocks or sticks
- Back away slowly

IF A COUGAR IS WATCHING YOU OR APPROACHES

Maintain eye contact. Show your teeth. Make loud noises. If the cougar makes contact, fight back and keep it in front of you. Focus your attack on their eyes and face.



WHAT COUGARS EAT

Cougars are carnivores and the top predator in our forests. A cougar's main prey is deer, but they also eat coyotes, black bear cubs, rodents, and house pets.

Cougars are most active at dusk and dawn, but will hunt at any time of day or night, in all seasons.

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 food that may encourage them to stay.

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



Though extremely unlikely, if you do find cougar cubs, leave the area immediately. A female cougar will defend her young. Cubs stay with their mother for two years.

More information can be found at:
www.wildsafebc.com/cougar