



ARE MOUNTAIN LIONS DANGEROUS?

While human encounters are rare in Arizona, mountain lions are large predators that can seriously injure or kill humans. Conflicts can occur when a mountain lion becomes too accustomed to the presence of people, often near where we live or recreate, and begins preying on livestock or other domestic animals. Urban sprawl results in shrinking mountain lion habitat and increases the number of conflicts between humans and mountain lions.

The Arizona Game and Fish Department is committed to helping people learn how to behave responsibly and live safely in mountain lion habitat. However, animals that pose a threat to public safety – as determined by a strict protocol developed with extensive public input – must be lethally removed. Because mountain lions are very territorial, relocating problem animals to a new area often results in their injury or death. More importantly, relocating a problem wild animal puts other visitors or residents in the new area at risk.

RESOURCES

For more information on mountain lions in Arizona, visit www.azgfd.gov/mountainlion or call the Department at:

Flagstaff (928) 774-5045	Pinetop (928) 367-4281
Kingman (928) 692-7700	Tucson (520) 628-5376
Mesa (480) 981-9400	Yuma (928) 342-0091
Phoenix (602) 942-3000	



www.azgfd.gov

Arizona Game and Fish Department
5000 West Carefree Hwy.
Phoenix, Arizona 85086
(602) 942-3000

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MOUNTAIN LION TRAITS AND BEHAVIORS

- Specialized top-level predators that are also called pumas, cougars or panthers
- Between 2,500 and 3,500 mountain lions live in Arizona
- Weigh 70-150 pounds with males being larger
- Primarily eat deer, but also javelina, bighorn sheep, elk, small mammals and occasionally livestock and pets
- Typically stalk and ambush prey from high vantage points like trees or rock ledges
- Average litter of three kittens. Adults are tan in color; juveniles have black spots.
- Secretive, shy and elusive animals that prefer to remain hidden in their surroundings
- Found throughout Arizona. Species has one of the most extensive ranges of any land mammal, from Canada to South America.

LIVING WITH MOUNTAIN LIONS



WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I SEE A MOUNTAIN LION?

- Do not approach a mountain lion. Most wild animals will try to avoid a human confrontation. Give them a way to safely escape.
- Do not run from a mountain lion. Running may stimulate a mountain lion's instinct to chase. Stand and face the animal. Make eye contact.
- Protect small children so they won't panic and run.
- Stay calm and speak loudly and firmly.
- Appear larger: raise your arms. Open your jacket if you are wearing one. Throw stones, branches, or whatever you can reach without crouching or turning your back. Wave your arms slowly. The idea is to convince the mountain lion that you may be a danger to it.
- Slowly back away from the area.
- Fight back if attacked: many potential victims have fought back successfully with rocks, sticks, caps, jackets, garden tools and their bare hands. Since a mountain lion usually tries to bite the head or neck, try to remain standing and face the animal.



TIPS FOR LIVING IN MOUNTAIN LION COUNTRY

- Hike or walk in groups.
- Make noise when you're outside.
- Closely supervise children in mountain lion habitat. Watch children when they play outside in areas where mountain lions could live and between dusk and dawn when mountain lions primarily hunt. Talk with children about mountain lions and what to do if they encounter one.
- Keep pets indoors, on a leash or in a secure enclosure. Roaming pets can be easy prey for mountain lions and other predators. Do not feed pets outside; the food can attract javelina and other mountain lion prey.
- Don't feed wildlife! By feeding deer, javelina or other wildlife in your yard, you may inadvertently attract the larger predators that prey on these animals.
- Trim landscaping around your home, especially near children's play areas. Remove dense and low-lying vegetation that provide hiding places for predators.
- Install outdoor lighting. Keep the house perimeter, doorways and walkways well lit at night.



KNOW THE LAW

Mountain lions are classified as big-game animals in Arizona and take is regulated by state law. A valid hunting license and tag is required to take a mountain lion, except in the case of depredation or human safety.

REPORT MOUNTAIN LION SIGHTINGS

To report a mountain lion sighting or encounter, please call the nearest Arizona Game and Fish Department regional office during weekday business hours. During non-business hours, call the Arizona Game and Fish Department radio dispatcher at (623) 236-7201.

In the event of an attack, dial 911.

WHAT ABOUT RABIES?

Mountain lions can be infected with the rabies virus. However, the occurrence in this species is extremely low.

DID YOU KNOW?

- A mountain lion can consume an entire deer in two nights.
- Although the chance of encountering a mountain lion is small, it is possible, especially if you are out between dusk and dawn.
- In an unhurried walk, lions usually place the hind paw in the imprint made by the front paw.
- A mountain lion can jump 20 feet vertically and 40 feet horizontally in a single leap.
- Mountain lion tracks have four toes with three distinct lobes at the base of the pad, resulting in distinctive M-shaped prints. Claw marks are usually not visible.

