

Mountain lion facts

Mountain lions are not rare in Arizona

- Mountain lions are not an endangered, threatened, or sensitive species in Arizona.
- The Department's harvest data suggests the mountain lion population is stable to increasing in many parts of the state. Our current population is estimated to range from approximately 2,000 to 2,700 statewide, and based on harvest data, there is no indication of population decline.
- The mountain lion population range in Arizona is expanding to regions of the state where they were once rarely seen.

Mountain lions are managed using the best available science

- Regulated harvest utilizing hunters is viewed as the most effective method to manage mountain lion populations.
- The use of regulated harvest generates revenue for the management of not only mountain lions but also other wildlife species.
- Mountain lion hunting is regulated by state statute and Commission Order.
 - It is unlawful to harvest a female lion with kittens or to harvest a spotted kitten.
- The Department has implemented several changes to update "best management practices" as part of the agency's adaptive management protocols that dictate the Commission evaluate and establish management guidelines on a periodic basis.
 - Establishment of several zones in the state with harvest thresholds that would close that zone when a predetermined number of mountain lions have been harvested.
- The Department manages mountain lions using data derived from harvested animals. Every harvested mountain lion has to be physically checked in by a Department employee so age and sex data can be collected and analyzed to determine the age distribution of harvested animals. These data are used to create a demographic representation of the population in the wild.
- In addition, the Department uses harvested female data to adjust open areas if the harvest of adult females exceeds a predetermined percentage of the harvest.
 - This threshold, which is based on the best available science, has never been met in Arizona.
- There is no such thing as a "trophy" mountain lion hunt in Arizona. Mountain lions are managed for sustainable harvest that doesn't put the species at risk. The term "trophy" has repeatedly been misused to mislead people into a distorted view of mountain lion harvest.