



HUMAN-COUGAR CONFLICTS

- Cougars account for approximately 2,500 calls to the Conservation Officer Service reporting line every year.
- Many reported cougar sightings turn out to be animals other than cougars.
- Cougars in conflict are often young cougars that have dispersed into habitat also occupied by people.
- Cougars are most active during the period from dusk until dawn, and this period requires extra vigilance by hikers and dog walkers while in cougar country.
- When recreating in BC, be aware of your surroundings and do not wear headphones. Make noise to alert wildlife to your presence and avoid surprise encounters.
- Cougars may opportunistically prey on free-ranging house cats or pets off leash.
- Cougars can leap over 3 m. Using solid fencing can help deter cougars from jumping over a fence where they cannot see the landing.
- Avoid feeding or attracting other wild animals that may be prey for cougars such as deer. Fallen seed from bird feeders can attract rodents which are potential prey for cougars.



The BC Conservation Foundation is a not-for-profit, registered charity that has been working in BC since 1969.

Learn more at

www.bccf.com



To report wildlife in conflict contact the Conservation Officer Service at

1.877.952.7277

WildSafeBC is funded through the Province of British Columbia and in partnership with communities and organizations throughout BC.



British Columbia Conservation Foundation

www.wildsafebc.com

Version 1.6 - 2023



COUGAR



British Columbia Conservation Foundation





MANAGE YOUR ATTRACTANTS

Cougars are wide-ranging animals and may show up in urban settings from time to time. If they are passing through it is important they do not find food that may encourage them to stay.

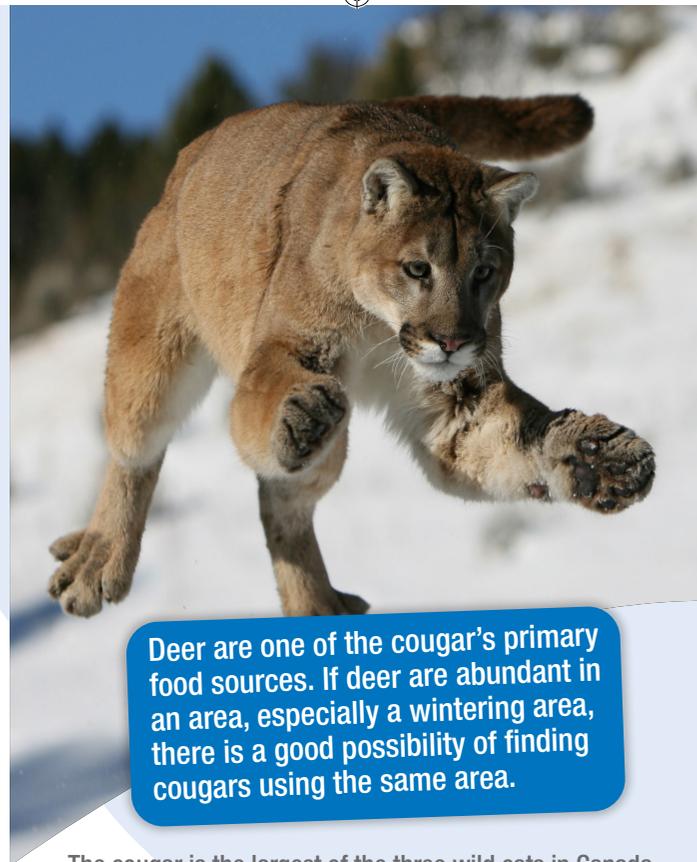
1. **Feed pets indoors**, or if fed outdoors, bring in any uneaten food as pet food may attract cougars.
2. **Keep your pets indoors, especially at night.** Cats and dogs that are left to roam free may become prey to predators such as cougars, coyotes and wolves. They may also get into altercations with other smaller mammals.
3. **Bird feeders can attract cougars.** If the ground below the feeder is not kept clear, seeds can accumulate, attracting rodents and, in turn, attracting cougars and other predators that feed on the rodents.
4. **If you keep chickens or small livestock** keep them in an enclosure at night. Use lighting around barns and pens to deter predators. Store all your feed in a secure location and ensure feeding areas are clean and free of attractants that can attract rodents and their predators.
5. **Never feed deer or other possible prey species** for cougars. While deer may be pleasant to watch, they can attract large predators such as cougars and wolves into residential areas. As well, urban deer are a growing source of conflict in many communities in BC.

! COUGAR SAFETY TIPS

Attacks by cougars are rare but can be fatal, especially if young children are involved. In all cases you must fight back as cougar attacks are always predatory and the cougar sees you as prey. Use rocks, sticks, or whatever you have at hand to protect yourself. Consider carrying bear spray with you year round when recreating in cougar country.

If you see a cougar that is watching you, maintain eye contact with the cougar and speak to it in a loud firm voice. Reinforce the fact that you are a human and not an easy target. Back out of the area and seek assistance or shelter.

Call the Conservation Officer Service at 1-877-952-7277 to report the incident.



Deer are one of the cougar's primary food sources. If deer are abundant in an area, especially a wintering area, there is a good possibility of finding cougars using the same area.

The cougar is the largest of the three wild cats in Canada and is a **formidable hunter**. A large male cougar can weigh over 100 kg but are more likely to be in the 60-80 kg range. Typically females are about 25% smaller than males. Cougars are strict carnivores and usually hunt deer, but **will take down young moose, elk or bighorn sheep**. Cougars will also prey on rabbits, squirrels, beavers or other small animals when the opportunity presents itself.

The cat is light brown in colour and is quickly identified by its compact head and large heavy tail tipped at the end in black. Cougar tracks are large padded prints, often with no claws showing. Like domestic cats, cougars keep their claws retracted until needed for attacking their prey or for climbing trees.

Contrary to popular belief, cougars do not pounce on their prey from overhanging rocks or trees, but stalk an animal and then use an explosive series of bounds to leap onto their prey. Using both their razor sharp claws and powerful jaws, they can quickly kill most any prey they choose to attack.

Large prey takes a number of days to eat and the cougar will pull debris over the carcass to keep off scavengers. The cougar will stay near a kill site until the prey is totally consumed. If you find a kill site, leave the area immediately.



Wild cats of BC: cougar (top), lynx (bottom left), bobcat (bottom right).



COUGAR FACTS:

- Cougars are the the largest of the three wild cat species in BC, which also include bobcat and lynx.
- Cougars are “stalk and ambush” hunters and have extremely good vision.
- Cougars have large home ranges and males have been recorded as having travelled over 50 kilometers in one day.
- Young cougars stay with their mother for up to two years and then disperse to fend for themselves.
- Conflicts with cougars can occur with any age class but more often occur when sub-adults disperse into less suitable habitat occupied by humans.
- Cougars are secretive animals and are seldom seen by hikers.
- Cougars also go by the name mountain lion, puma, and panther.
- Cougar tracks tend to lack claw marks as they have retractable claws.
- Cougars have one of the widest distributions of mammals in the Americas and can be found all the way from Patagonia to the southern Yukon border.



www.wildsafebc.com