

Be Mountain Lion Smart

If You Meet A Mountain Lion

People rarely get more than a brief glimpse of a mountain lion in the wild. Attacks on humans by mountain lions are very rare, but it's still a good idea to be aware when recreating in the mountains in Colorado and in the West.

Human encounters with mountain lions have increased in recent years, as human settlement has encroached on lion habitat. Young lions, perhaps forced out to hunt on their own, may key in on easy prey, like pets and small children.

- When you walk or hike in mountain lion country, go in groups and make plenty of noise to reduce your chances of surprising a lion. A sturdy walking stick is a good idea; it can be used to ward off a lion. Make sure children are close to you and within your sight at all times. Talk with children about lions and teach them what to do if they meet one.
- Do not approach a lion, especially one that is feeding or with kittens. Most mountain lions will try to avoid a confrontation. Give them a way to escape.
- **Stay calm** when you come upon a lion. Talk calmly yet firmly to it. Move slowly.
- **Stop or back away slowly**, if you can do it safely. Running may stimulate a lion's instinct to chase and attack. Face the lion and stand upright.
- **Do all you can to appear larger.** Raise your arms. Open your jacket if you're wearing one. If you have small children with you, protect them by picking them up so they won't panic and run.
- If the lion behaves aggressively, throw stones, branches or whatever you can get your hands on without crouching down or turning your back. Wave your arms slowly and speak firmly. What you want to do is convince the lion you are not prey and that you may in fact be a danger to the lion.
- **Fight back** if a lion attacks you. Lions have been driven away by prey that fights back. People have fought back with rocks, sticks, caps or jackets, garden tools and their bare hands successfully. Remain standing or try to get back up!

If you have an encounter with a lion or an attack occurs, immediately contact the Colorado Parks & Wildlife, Monday through Friday, 8am–5pm, 970-247-0855. Before or after these hours, contact the Colorado State Patrol or La Plata County Sheriff Office.

LWAB member Gary Skiba published an informative article in the Durango Herald (September 25, 2014) on action to take when encountering a mountain lion.

Living in Lion Country

We can live with these incredibly efficient predators if we respect mountain lions and their habitat. To reduce the risk of problems with mountain lions on or near your property, we urge you to follow these simple precautions:

- Make lots of noise if you come and go during the times mountain lions are most active—dusk to dawn.
- Install outside lighting. Light areas where you walk so you could see a lion if one were present.
- Closely supervise children whenever they play outdoors. Make sure children are inside before dusk and not outside before dawn. Talk with children about lions and teach them what to do if they meet one.
- Landscape or remove vegetation to eliminate hiding places for lions, especially around children's play areas. Make it difficult for lions to approach unseen.
- Planting non-native shrubs and plants that deer often prefer to eat encourages wildlife to come onto your property. Predators follow prey. Don't feed any wildlife!
- Keep your pet under control. Roaming pets are easy prey and can attract lions. Bring pets in at night. If you leave your pet outside, keep it in a kennel with a secure top. Don't feed pets outside; this can attract raccoons and other animals that are eaten by lions. Store all garbage securely.
- Place livestock in enclosed sheds or barns at night. Close doors to all outbuildings since inquisitive lions may go inside for a look.
- Encourage your neighbors to follow these simple precautions. Prevention is far better than a possible lion confrontation.

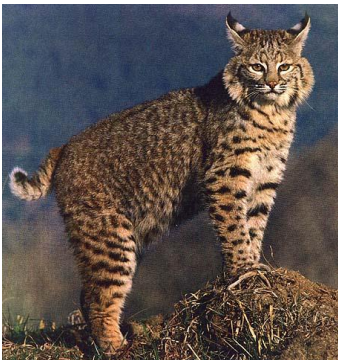
Other Cats in the La Plata County



The Lynx is a large, bob-tailed cat, three feet long with a black-tipped tail only about one-eighth the total length, and only about half the length of its huge hind foot. Weights are 20 – 30 pounds. The coat is grayish, with obscure spots. The magnificent ear tufts may be nearly as long as the actual ears.

Lynx are easily confused with its more common and more widespread relative, the bobcat. The lynx is slightly larger than the bobcat, has grayish (rather than reddish) fur, less prominent spots, a conspicuous ear tuft, and a solid black tip (rather than a black tip broken with a reddish band) on the tail. The lynx's tail is relatively shorter and its hind foot is much longer (greater than 8 inches, versus less than eight inches in the bobcat).

Bobcat



The Bobcat is a familiar animal, but it is secretive and seldom seen. The animals are 32–37 inches long with a tail about 6 inches in length. Bobcats are similar in appearance to their cousin, the lynx. Indeed, they are especially difficult to distinguish in the Southern Rockies, where the local bobcat is large and pale in color. Hasty observers

sometimes confuse mountain lion kittens – which are spotted – with bobcats or lynx, but that is a careless error because young cougars have distinctly long tails.

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