



What is a cougar?

Cougars “*Feline Concolour*”, meaning cat of one colour, are large cats found throughout the Western Hemisphere from Northern BC to Patagonia in Southern Argentina. Because of their wide-ranging distribution, cougars have many names: mountain lion, puma, deer

tiger, Indian devil, Mexican lion, and ghost of the Rockies, among others.



What do cougars look like?

Male cougars can grow up to nine feet and can weigh over 200 pounds; however, on average they are usually around 6 feet and 125 lbs. Females are slightly smaller, weighing around 100 lbs. In BC, their fur colour ranges from red-brown to grey-brown with a white underside.

Where do cougars live?

Cougars can be found in a variety of habitats ranging from mountainous areas to low land swamps. An individual cougar can mark a territory as large as 100 square miles. A male will share its territory with that of several females; however, he will not overlap with another male.

A cougar's habitat may change depending on the season since they follow the migratory patterns of their prey.

Can I see one in the wild?

Cougars are solitary and elusive animals. Chances are, they will see you long before you will catch a glimpse of them. They may run if they feel threatened, but they could also attack or simply just observe. If you do manage to spot one in the wild, consider yourself lucky, as it is a rare experience.

What do cougars eat?

Cougars are known for their adept predatory abilities and can kill prey as large as moose or elk. Their staple food is mostly deer, but they also hunt a variety of other animals such as small rodents, birds, mountain sheep, bear cubs and livestock. They kill by stalking and then pouncing on the neck and shoulders of their prey and delivering one fatal bite to the neck. Cougars always hunt alone and they never eat carrion. They will feed from the same carcass several times, and will usually bury their kill with dirt and brush.

Mating and Reproduction

Male cougars are polygamous and therefore will mate with several females. When a female is ready to mate, the male will pick up on the scent of her urine. The courtship period usually lasts about three days, and they can mate up to 40 times in one day.

Females act as the sole caregiver to their young and can give birth to a litter as large as six kittens; however, litter sizes usually range from one to four. The gestation period is 96 days and kittens stay with their mothers for about one and a half years.

Are cougars endangered?



Cougars are regal and mysterious creatures and are an integral component of BC's landscape. Although hunting is permitted, the government imposes quotas to ensure the population is both controlled and properly managed to encourage a healthy ecosystem. In Florida, the panther, a subspecies of the cougar, is listed as endangered. In other parts of the world, cougars do not receive the same respect and will be shot on site as vermin.

Are cougars dangerous to humans?

Cougars rarely attack humans but will if they are starving or protecting their young. Unfortunately, with human population growth comes increased threat to other species' habitat; so as more human beings encroach on cougars' territory, the threat of attack will increase. Although it is thought that cougar populations can be controlled through hunting and such, ultimately humans must ask themselves whether other species deserve to live on this planet too?

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