



Wildlife News & Views

The Cougar

by Angela Wiebe

(Journalism Student, Langara College)

Cougars, also known as pumas or mountain lions, are the most commonly found big cats in the Americas. They live in the southern half of British Columbia, with the highest population of cougars in the province on Vancouver Island. Until recently, these sleek and powerful cats were found in all parts of North and South America except in the Arctic. Unfortunately, cougars are rapidly vanishing from Canada and the United States because of persecution from humans, habitat loss, and the disappearance of their main food source, the White-Tailed Deer.

The largest of the lesser cats, cougars have lean, muscular bodies and exceptionally strong legs, which allow them to jump up to 20 feet when attacking their prey. Their fur is a rich, tan

colour with white on the belly, chin, and mouth. Their heads and ears are small and rounded. Despite their large size, cougars can only snarl and are not able to roar.

Contrary to popular belief, cougars are solitary animals and try to avoid human contact as much as possible. Even when living in the same area as humans, cougars quite often go unseen. These cats can live in mountainous areas, semi-arid terrain, subtropical and tropical forests and swamps. Each adult cougar lives and hunts alone, leaving urine on piles of leaves and twigs as territorial indicators. Generally, cougars will mutually avoid each other's territory, which can be as large as 100 square miles.



Art by Robert Savannah
for US Fish and Wildlife Service
Copyright Robert Savannah 2002

Cougars are very skilled hunters thanks to their speed and agility in running, climbing, and swimming. They are most often nocturnal hunters and have excellent eyesight and a keen sense of hearing. However, unlike other cats, cougars can also adapt to their prey's habits and hunt during the day. Mountain cats love to stalk and pounce on their prey rather than chase it. They will attempt to hide themselves in a crouched position in order to surprise their victim. After leaping onto the animals' back, cougars kill their prey with one bite on the neck. Usually, cougars will cover the carcass with leaves after the initial feeding to save it for later meals.

There is no fixed mating season for cougars during the year. Instead, for two weeks a year a male and female cougar will hunt and sleep side by side. One to six young are usually born every other midsummer and weigh about 14 ounces. The mother will deliver her cubs in a maternity den, which is lined with moss or other vegetation and located in a protected place such as a cave. The cubs stay with their mother for about a year and a half and communicate by licking, rubbing, and vocalizing.

If you encounter a cougar, stay calm, face the animal and do not run away. Do everything you can to appear as large as possible, such as raising your arms or opening your jacket. If the cougar acts aggressively, throw rocks or branches without turning around or bending down too much. If the cougar still tries to attack, try to remain standing and fight back. People have successfully fought back with anything from a rock to their bare hands! Once the cougar realizes you are not an appropriate prey, it will likely leave you alone.

News & Views This Issue

Presentation Profile:

<i>Wolves</i>	Pg. 2
From the Desk of the Executive Director	Pg. 2
Wolf and Cougar cull approved	Pg. 2
The Wolf	Pg. 3
Great Canadian Shoreline Clean-up	Pg. 3
NWPS's Fundraising Efforts	Pg. 4
Green Ribbon Campaign	Pg. 4
Light Bulb Campaign	Pg. 4
Sponsor Recognition	Pg. 4

Northwest Wildlife Preservation Society

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President:

Jim Pigott

Vice-President:

Michele Kvarnstrom

Secretary/Treasurer:

Steve Ripley

STAFF

Executive Director:

Ann Peters

Education & Communications

Coordinator:

Melissa Tupper

Wildlife Educator:

Kyle Margenau

From the Desk of the Executive Director

This is my first foray into newsletter column writing so I think it best that I introduce myself. I have had the pleasure of being the Executive Director for Northwest Wildlife Preservation Society for the past 4 years. Prior to that I was NWPS's Office Manager and have been involved with NWPS since the early 1990s. During these years I have seen many changes in the Society not only in the programs provided but in the people who have been involved. The fact that I have been involved so long might suggest that I actually like the organization but the truth of the matter is I love it. I hope to continue in my capacity of Executive Director until NWPS sees fit to kick me out.

NWPS, like all living organisms, changes with time. When I became involved with the society we had one part time staff member and were facing enormous funding challenges. Being a non-profit, this reality faces us each and every day but NWPS has grown to a point where we now employ 2 staff members and with me, that makes 3! We also have numerous volunteers who join us in the office on a regular basis. We are a close-knit family and manage to accomplish things that are phenomenal in scope. Unfortunately, we had to say good-bye to Sandra Lostritto, our Education & Communications Coordinator, who has been with us for the past two years. Sandra went back to her home town, Toronto, to pursue her education further. Melissa Tupper, our former Volunteer & Campaign Coordinator, has taken Sandra's position, and we welcome Kyle Margenau, who has recently joined us as a Wildlife Educator. Without these hard-working people NWPS would not be as successful as it has become.

In coming newsletters, I will be writing about all the various activities and happenings at NWPS. I look forward to being able to share my excitement and pride with NWPS's newsletter audience and hope to hear from you with regards to suggestions and comments on NWPS's newsletters, programs, and direction.

Ann Peters

Presentation Profile: *Wolves*

Northwest Wildlife Preservation Society is keen to share its knowledge of wildlife and wildlife habitats in British Columbia with all British Columbians. Over the years, we have developed exciting and interactive programs for audiences of all ages. Enjoy beautiful pictures of B.C.'s wildlife taken by award-winning photographers as you listen to informative and entertaining presentations about our animal neighbours who

make British Columbia the most biologically diverse province in Canada!



Art by Melissa A. Bradshaw
www.stablegirl.com
Copyright Melissa Bradshaw
2000

Powerful and mysterious, wolves have aroused strong feelings of fear and awe in people all over the world. In our Wolves presentation, we dispel some of the negative myths surrounding these majestic mammals, explore their fascinating way of life, and make you aware of their current plight for survival and what we can do to help them.

Did you know that wolves can travel up to 200 km in a day? Masters of endurance, wolves can run for 20 minutes at 60 km per hour, comparable to a fast drive to UBC from downtown Vancouver! Eloquent creatures, wolves communicate via subtle facial expressions as well as using physical gestures, postures, and highly systematic vocalizations to maintain order within their packs. Many scientists believe that wolves maintain the most sophisticated form of social organization next to humans.

Due to habitat loss and hunting, the number of wolves around the world has decreased dramatically. In B.C., since the wolves were designated as big game and fur-bearing animals that could be legally hunted and trapped in late '60s and '70s, approximately 80% of all the wolves in the province have been destroyed over the last forty years. The International Union for the Conservation of Nature classify wolves in the vulnerable category, indicating that they are globally threatened.

If you would like to learn more about Wolves or other presentations offered by Northwest Wildlife Preservation Society, or for information on how to book a presentation, please e-mail us at info@northwestwildlife.com or call us at 604-713-6686. We'd be delighted to speak with you!

Wolf and Cougar cull approved

As we learn more about wolves and cougars they continue to be threatened by human actions. Recently, a large scale cull of wolves and cougars on Vancouver Island was proposed to assist with Sitka deer and Vancouver Island Marmot recovery. The Raincoast Conservation Society, on Vancouver Island, spearheaded a letter, petition and email campaign to stop the cull. Unfortunately, Joyce Murray, BC's Minister of Land, Water and Air Protection, decided to go ahead with a cull of up to 30 wolves and 20 cougars on Vancouver Island near marmot colonies. This was despite information that logging of old growth forests, not predation, is the major cause of the decline in marmot populations. Special thanks to Chris Genovali and Kira MacDuffee of Raincoast Conservation Society for providing the information for this story. For more information on the proposed Vancouver Island Wolf and Cougar cull visit www.raincoast.org.

Spring 2003

Wild on Wolves

by Victoria Cheung

(NWPS Volunteer)

Wolves have been a ubiquitous animal in the forests of British Columbia. Although they shun human contact, they are one of the first animals that come to mind when B.C. wildlife is mentioned. Yet, like many species that live in the forest, the number of wolves in B.C. has greatly declined due to hunting and loss of habitat. Soon, these magnificent creatures may become extinct and people in the future may only know of the wolf from stories and history books. We need to take the time and effort to learn more about the wolf and strive to preserve them, so our children's children can experience their majesty and grandeur in the wild.

The largest members of the dog family, almost all wolves belong to a species called the *grey wolf (Canis lupus)*. Within this species are two subspecies, the *timber wolf* and the *tundra wolf*. The timber wolf lives in subarctic and wooded areas, and the tundra wolf, also known as arctic wolf or white wolf, lives in the arctic. Another species of wolf called *red wolves (Canis rufus)* used to be found quite commonly but are now nearly extinct. Only a few hundred red wolves remain, and most of them live in captivity. Highly adaptable, wolves can live almost anywhere, except in deserts and tropical forests.

The size of a wolf pack is highly variable because of the number of pups within a given pack. Some packs have as many as thirty members. Within the pack is a hierarchy of dominant and submissive members. Dominant members are recognized by the proud way they stand, with their heads up and tails erect. Submissive wolves are the complete opposite—heads down, tails between their legs. The packs control a hunting territory marked by urine from the pack leader, called the *alpha*. The packs hunt hoofed animals such as caribou and deer. Amazingly, a pack of wolves can kill a 2000 pound bison!



Wolf-mating season is in the winter, with a gestation period of sixty-three days. There are normally 5 or 6 pups in a litter but sometimes as many as eleven, who are usually born in a sheltered area such as a cave.

When it comes to wolves, many misconceptions abound. Wolves have been portrayed in television shows and movies as dangerous killers that hunt and kill humans and their vicious looks and sharp teeth are often emphasized to instill fear in people. In reality, wolves fear humans and attack only when they feel threatened. Hunters blame wolves for the loss of game animals in certain areas, while wolves destroying sheep, cows and other livestock have provoked farmers and ranchers. Folklore has also contributed to the wolf's bad reputation. Expressions such as "to keep the wolf from the door" (to prevent hunger or poverty) and "a wolf in sheep's clothing" (a person who acts friendly but has evil intentions) has negatively stereotyped wolves for centuries.

Due to bad publicity, people not only shun these beautiful animals, but unnecessarily kill them. Organized hunts have killed thousands of wolves, and bounties have been offered for their pelts. Now, the grey wolf is classified as an endangered species. To help these creatures, we can educate ourselves and others about them and why they are magnificent creatures we should protect.

The Great Canadian Shoreline Clean-up



Northwest Wildlife Preservation Society proudly participated in last year's **Great Canadian Shoreline Clean-up** on September 14th, 2002. This annual event attracts people from across Western Canada to clear away unnatural debris from lake and ocean shores, rivers, streams, and wetlands in Canada. The Great Canadian Shoreline Clean-up is Canada's contribution to the International Coastal Cleanup, and is coordinated by the Vancouver Aquarium Marine Science Centre.

Many volunteers, led by our Education & Communications Coordinator, Melissa Tupper, ventured out to Sunset Beach on English Bay on a picturesque Saturday morning to see what kind of junk awaited them! A number of children and families participated as well; it was wonderful to see kids having a great time as they learned about debris that ends up the beach. We hope that such a positive experience will grow to instill a lifetime of respect for the environment in young people.

The top 5 items found were:

1. cigarette remains (539)
2. bits of glass (343)
3. food wrappers (207)
4. bottle caps and lids (76)
5. straws and stir sticks (39)

(for a complete list, please visit our website at www.northwestwildlife.com where you can also check out pictures of our beach clean-up volunteers in action!)

The preliminary results from the Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup report that over 350 km of shoreline has been cleared, with more than 10,000 volunteers participating.

Please join us again next year in our clean-up and share the enthusiasm with groups from all across Canada. Thank you to all participants this year for making our clean-up such a success!



GREEN RIBBON CAMPAIGN

The Green Ribbon Campaign is an Earth Day awareness and fundraising campaign administered by Northwest Wildlife Preservation Society (NWPS). NWPS uses the funds generated from the campaign to provide environmental education programs to children and adults in BC.

This is our second year of the Green Ribbon Campaign, and we will be distributing green ribbons throughout the province during the month of April 2003, in celebration of Earth Day. Please show your support of the environment and celebrate Earth Day by wearing a green ribbon!

If you would like more information on our campaign, or to get involved as a volunteer, distributor, sponsor, or Corporate Star, please feel free to contact us at (604) 713-6686, email info@greenribbon.ca, or visit our website at www.greenribbon.ca

SPONSOR RECOGNITION

Northwest Wildlife Preservation Society would like to thank the following sponsors:

Alderwoods Group (Canada) Inc.

Allegra Print & Imaging

Chevron Canada Ltd.

CoastCapital Savings

Ikon

Office Depot

TD Friends of the Environment Foundation

News & Views is published by Northwest Wildlife Preservation Society #605-1112 West Pender Street Vancouver, BC V6E 2S1 (604) 713-6686; (604) 713-6698 Fax: (604) 713-6696 www.northwestwildlife.com info@northwestwildlife.com

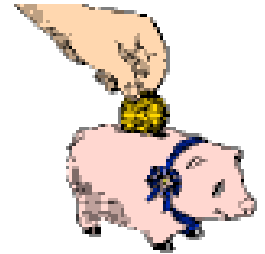
Edited by Monica Kim & Kyle Margenau
Contributors: Victoria Cheung, Monica Kim, Sandra Lostritto, Ann Peters, Melissa Tupper, and Angela Wiebe

NWPS is a registered charity and a non-profit society. Our mandate is to develop and provide educational, research, and advisory services that advance the public's awareness and knowledge of wildlife and wildlife habitat in northwest North America. In doing so, NWPS works to ensure that healthy wildlife systems throughout North America are preserved for their own intrinsic worth and for the appreciation of all. *News and Views* is intended to be a forum for discussion. Opinions of authors of articles contained herein are not necessarily the position of NWPS.

NWPS'S FUNDRAISING EFFORTS

Fundraising has always presented a major challenge to non-profit organizations. Understanding the demands placed on Corporations and Foundations NWPS has embarked on more creative fundraising activities and methods of revenue generation. We have met with success on a number of ventures and hope that future activities are as successful.

NWPS submitted a number of funding proposals for our Wildlife in the Schools programs as well as our Estuaries Stewardship projects. We were very lucky to have both requests funded for 2003. The Wildlife in the Schools program provides free environmental education presentations to classes in the Lower Mainland. For 2003 we have had 30 presentations made available from the generous support of Chevron and Coast Capital Savings. Chevron, Office Depot and TD Friends of the Environment have been kind enough to provide support for two Estuaries Stewardship Projects for 2003 and we have already been in contact with the appropriate schools to set these projects in motion.



The Green Ribbon Campaign will be in your neighbourhood for the month of April 2003. We were exceedingly successful in our first year and hope to capitalize on that success in our second year. Wear a Green Ribbon and show your support.

NWPS continues to develop alliances with the business community in an effort to generate sustainable funding. We are currently marketing energy efficient light bulbs throughout the Lower Mainland and have met with great acceptance and success. Through this campaign we are providing environmental education to the adult community. We are determined to make being environmentally responsible easy for everyone. NWPS will continue to search out and provide environmentally friendly household products and services to the community. Our light bulb campaign is just one example of how an environmentally responsible product can make a significant positive impact on the environment.

LIGHTBULB CAMPAIGN



Did you know that most regular lightbulbs convert 90% of energy into heat and only 10% as light? Since most of us have central heating in our homes, we have no need for this extra heat source! Aside from the wastefulness, the heat given off from conventional bulbs causes the colours of lampshades to deteriorate faster, so the lampshades need to be replaced more frequently, especially if they are made of fabric, paper, or light plastic.

NWPS's new fundraising campaign presents energy-efficient Longstar bulbs. These fluorescent bulbs replace regular incandescent bulbs of 40, 60, and 100 Watts and use only 9, 13, and 26 Watts of energy, each respectively. With an average life of 8000 hours which may last up to 6 years, these bulbs can be used in any lamp or light fixture at home and the office. You'll save up to 15% on your next hydro bill by switching to Longstar bulbs! What's more, whether it is a 2-bulb starter pack or a 10-bulb set, we deliver the bulbs right to your door! Check our website at www.northwestwildlife.com to purchase the bulbs, or call us at 604-669-7515 to order yours today!

