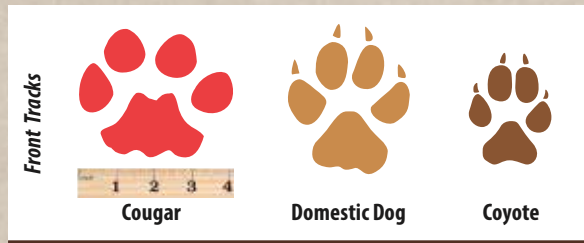


Mountain Lion Sign

Be on the lookout for signs of mountain lion activity when you're outdoors. Not only is it exciting to see traces of mountain lion presence, but it can signal you to be more alert on the trail.

Mountain lion **tracks** show four toes and an M-shaped heel pad with two lobes at the top and three at the base. Due to their retractable claws, claw marks may not be present (unlike dogs).



Scat is roughly the size of a large dog's, is dense and segmented, blunt at both ends, and about four to six inches long. Scat may be covered with loose soil.

Lions will make **scrapes and scratches** to attract mates or mark territory. Scrapes are mounds of ground debris made by pushing their hind feet. Scratches are made on logs, trees, or fence posts.

A **cache site**, and sometimes drag marks, are made by lions after killing prey. The cats hide and cover the carcass with debris and branches.



For information about mountain lions, visit:

- PeopleAndCarnivores.org
- MountainLion.org
- FieldGuide.Mt.gov

Report mountain lion encounters or incidents to your local Montana Fish, Wildlife, & Parks office.



People and Carnivores and the Mountain Lion Foundation are nonprofit organizations registered under IRS 501(c)(3) public charity laws.

Photo credits: Wild Nature Media, Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee, Western Wildlife Outreach

Mountain Lions in Montana

How to Recreate Safely in Big Cat Country



PEOPLE AND CARNIVORES





About Montana's Mountain Lions

Mountain lions, also known as pumas, catamounts, and panthers, are North America's second largest cat after the jaguar. Lions are present across western Montana and dispersed throughout other portions of the state.

They are highly adaptable animals and can live in many habitats, including canyons, mountains, forested areas, as well as in developed areas.



As a keystone species, mountain lions play a crucial role in preserving the health and diversity of ecosystems. Their absence from areas they previously inhabited can lead to deer and elk over-browsing, and negatively affecting habitats for other species, including birds and amphibians. Lion kills provide food for many smaller species.

Mountain lions...

- Weigh 85–160 lbs.
- Have long, dark-tipped tails and uniform brown coats. Kittens (also called cubs) have spots that fade during their first year.
- Live 10–12 years in the wild. Kittens become independent at 1–2 years of age.
- Can leap 15 feet up a tree.
- Reach running speeds of 50 mph.

Recreating in Lion Country

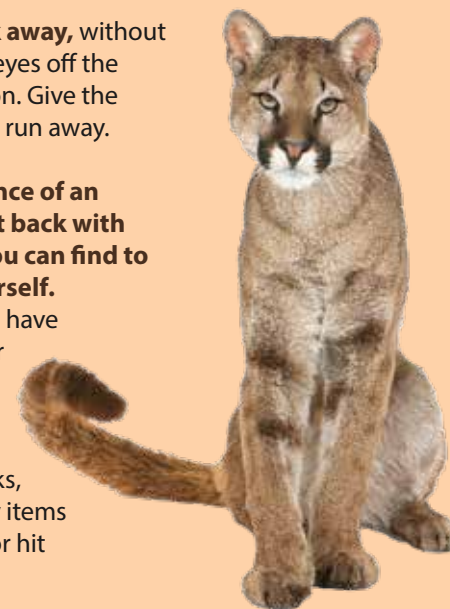
Recreating in mountain lion country makes the outdoors a truly wild experience. Mountain lions are secretive animals. They prefer to avoid humans and generally do not see people as prey. Attacks are extremely rare, but taking safety precautions will help you confidently enjoy the outdoors.



- **Recreate in groups and make noise.** When exploring the outdoors, do so with a partner or small group. Avoid using headphones or ear buds. Make noise in areas of low visibility to give lions the opportunity to leave the area and to avoid surprising them.
- **Avoid recreating at dawn, dusk, or in the dark** when mountain lions are most active. If you must be out at these times, use a headlamp or bright light, occasionally make noise, and stay attentive.
- **Be aware of carcasses.** Mountain lions keep carcasses active as a food source for days. Be aware of any carcass indications in areas where lions are present.
- **Keep children nearby and pets on a leash.** Always closely supervise children and small pets when outdoors.
- **When camping, choose sites wisely.** Camp away from thick brush, rock over-hangs, and animal trails.
- **Bear spray is effective** when used on mountain lions. Have bear spray accessible and know how to use it when out in lion country.

If You Encounter a Mountain Lion

- **Do not run.** Maintain eye contact and do not turn your back on the animal.
- **Make yourself as large as possible.** Make noise and lift/wave your arms to let the lion know you are not prey. If you have pets or small children, pick them up. Have your bear spray ready.
- **Slowly back away,** without taking your eyes off the mountain lion. Give the lion space to run away.
- **In the instance of an attack, fight back with anything you can find to defend yourself.** If you do not have bear spray or using it did not deter the lion, use rocks, sticks, or any items to throw at or hit the lion.



Bear spray is effective when used on mountain lions.

Have bear spray accessible and know how to use it when out in lion country.