



Mountain Lions

The mountain lion is an apex predator coexisting with us in the east San Francisco Bay area. Mountain lions are a keystone species which reflects the health of the environment.

In Contra Costa County mountain lions are faced with several challenges, particularly the fragmentation of habitat.

Mountain lions require large tracts of land territory and home range. Our freeways and suburbanization have divided the region into isolated, disconnected areas which mountain lions must navigate to access preferred habitat.

Vehicles are a leading cause of death for these animals. Upon entering into our backyards or cities, they pose a potential public safety concern. Your chances of being attacked by a mountain lion are extremely low.

There have been 16 confirmed attacks on humans by mountain lions in California since 1890. For comparison, one is 1,000 times more likely to be struck by lightning and 500 times more likely to be killed by a domestic dog.

To minimize risks of mountain lion attacks:

- Do not hike alone. Hike in groups.
- Keep children close to you and within your sight at all times when in lion country.
- Do not approach a lion. Most mountain lions will generally try to avoid a confrontation. Give them a way to escape.
- Do not run from a lion. Running may stimulate a mountain lion's instinct to chase. Instead, stand and face the animal. Make eye contact. If you have small children, pick them up if possible so they do not panic and run.
- Do not crouch or bend over. A person squatting or bending over looks a lot like a four-legged prey animal.
- Do all you can to appear larger. Raise your arms. Open your jacket if you are wearing one. Throw stones, branches or whatever you can reach without crouching or turning your back. Wave your arms slowly and speak firmly in a loud voice.
- Fight back if attacked with any means available, protecting your head and neck.