

Cougars and public safety

Cougar attacks on people are extremely rare. There has been one known attack by a wild cougar in Oregon, which was fatal. Attacks have happened in other states and in Canada.

Cougars are considered public safety risks when they are seen repeatedly in daylight around areas of human activity, or are attacking pets. If this happens, call your local ODFW office or 911.

Just glimpsing a cougar is not cause for alarm, especially if the cougar leaves the area. Cougars will often retreat if given the opportunity so if you do encounter one, give it a way to escape.

Do not approach any wildlife; stay at least 100 yards away.

For more information about living with cougars, visit www.odfw.com

Oregon is COUGAR COUNTRY



Preventing an encounter with a cougar:



STAY ALERT
Especially at dusk and dawn



HIKE IN GROUPS
and make noise so you don't surprise a cougar



KEEP DOGS ON LEASH
Pets running free can bring a cougar to you.



DON'T FEED WILDLIFE
Prey attracts predators



STORE FOOD IN CONTAINERS
Make sure they are animal proof

What to do during an encountering with a cougar that does not retreat:



DON'T RUN
Running triggers a chase response in cougars, Stop, stand your ground and back away slowly. Keep eye contact with the cougar (avoid eye contact with a bear).



MAKE NOISE
Raise your voice and speak firmly, Yell and clap your hands.



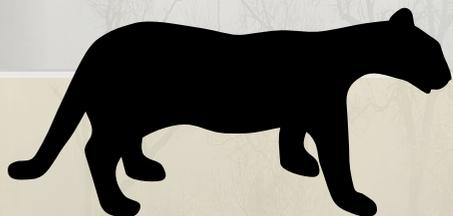
PICK UP CHILDREN
Do this without bending down or turning your back on the cougar.



RAISE ARMS
If the cougar seems aggressive, raise your arms to make yourself look larger.



FIGHT BACK
In the rare event of an attack. Keep bear spray handy for quick access and practice using it. (works for coyotes too) Be aggressive, shout, throw tools, sticks and rocks.



If you are involved in a face-to-face encounter with a cougar or any animal, call the nearest ODFW office, Oregon State Police or the land manager if on public land.

Guidelines for living with Cougars



Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife

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Living in Cougar Country

Some common sense guidelines can keep you and your neighborhood safe.

- Learn your neighborhood. Be aware of any wildlife corridors or places where deer or elk concentrate.
- Walk pets during the day and keep them on a leash.
- Keep pets indoors at dawn and dusk. Shelter them for the night.
- Feed pets indoors.
- Don't leave food or garbage outside. Use animal-proof garbage cans if necessary.
- Remove heavy brush from near the house and play areas.
- Install motion-activated lights outdoors along walkways and driveways.
- Be more cautious at dawn and dusk when cougars are most active.
- Do not feed any wildlife. By attracting other wildlife you may attract a cougar.
- Keep areas around bird feeders clean.
- Deer-proof your garden and yard with nets, lights and fencing.
- Fence and shelter livestock. Move them to sheds or barns at night.
- Report any cougar sighting or encounter to a local ODFW office or Oregon State Police office.

ATTENTION LANDOWNERS:

Oregon law allows landowners to kill a cougar that is damaging livestock or property. If you experience cougar damage, call your local ODFW office.



Recreating in Cougar Country

Cougars will usually sense people and leave an area, but by following these guidelines you can further minimize your risk of encountering one.

- Be aware of your surroundings at all times.
- Leave your dog at home—or at least keep it on a leash and under your control
- Keep children close to you. Teach them about wildlife.
- Keep campsites clean. Sleep 100 yards from cooking areas.
- Steer clear of baby wildlife. The mother is likely to be nearby.
- Be alert when sitting quietly or stopping to rest.
- Be especially alert at dawn and dusk when cougars are most active.
- Be aware that animal calls and animal kills can attract a cougar
- Carry bear spray (which also works for cougars) and understand how to use it.
- Report any cougar encounter to local ODFW office or 911.

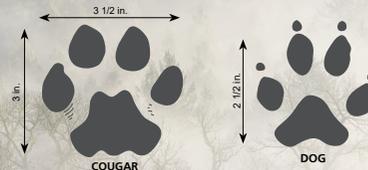
Cougar tracks versus dog tracks

Cougar tracks

- Tracks do not generally include claw marks because cougars have retractable claws.
- The heel pad has three lobes at the base and is indented at the top, forming a distinct “M” shape.

Dog tracks

- Tracks usually include claw marks.
- The heel pads are more rounded.



About cougars

Cougars, also called mountain lions, are Oregon's largest cat species. Historically, cougar were one of the most widely distributed wildlife species in North America.

Native to Oregon, cougars are found throughout the state. Population densities vary depending on habitat with the highest densities in northeast Oregon and the southwest Cascade Mountains.

As they were in many other western states, cougars were originally bounty-hunted in Oregon. Until the late 1960s, they were classified as predators and had no protections under state law. Only about 200 cougars were estimated to be left when they were reclassified as game mammals in the late 1960s and came under ODFW management. With regulated hunting, the statewide population rebounded to an estimated 6,600 cougars of all age classes as of 2020.

Cougars are carnivores.

Their primary food sources are deer, elk, and bighorn sheep where available. Cougars, especially males, are very territorial and will defend their territory against other cougars.

Attention on cougars has increased as both the human and cougar populations have grown and more people work, play and live in areas inhabited by these big cats. By following the guidelines in this brochure, you can reduce your chances of a negative encounter.