

Whiskeytown

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Whiskeytown National
Recreation Area



Cat Of One Color

Catamount, cougar, puma or panther: these are all names belonging to the animal we call mountain lion at Whiskeytown.

Just the mention of this creature can stir mixed feelings in people. To many, the mountain lion is a symbol of wilderness, and inspires a sense of wonder and mystery. To others, it rouses a sense of fear and misgiving. Native Americans refer to the mountain lion as "ghost walker," probably because it is a solitary and elusive animal. Mountain lions are the largest predator at Whiskeytown, and are at the top of the food chain. They help maintain the balance of the ecosystem by keeping deer populations in check. With a better understanding of mountain lions and their habitat, we can coexist with these magnificent animals.



Cat Facts

Felis concolor: Cat of a single color.



Appearance: An adult mountain lion is tawny in color. The muzzle and chest are white, with dark triangular markings on either side of the mouth. The thick expressive tail makes up about one-third of the total length and is dark tipped.

Kittens are covered with blackish brown spots and have dark rings around their tails. The markings fade as they mature.

Size: Adult males may be more than 8 feet long from nose to tip of tail and weigh between 130 to 150 pounds. Females can be

7 feet long and weigh between 65 and 90 pounds.

Behavior: Mountain lions usually hunt at night and favor dense forests that provide good stalking cover. They are powerful and normally prey upon large animals, such as deer. However, they can survive on a diet of small animals as well.

Mortality: A mountain lion can live about 12 years in the wild. Natural enemies include bears and other lions. They also fall victim to disease and road accidents.

Encounters

Mountain lions are shy, and typically avoid contact with people. Few people ever see these elusive animals in the wild. However, mountain lions have been known to attack people and pets. When visiting mountain lion territory, precautions should be taken.

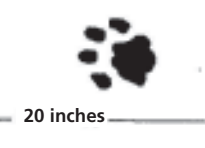
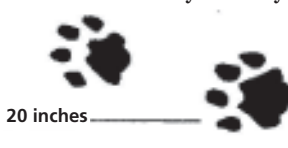
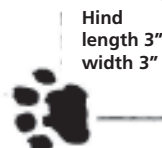
For Your Safety:

- Do not hike alone. Travel in groups and supervise children.
- Never approach a mountain lion, especially a feeding one. These animals normally avoid a confrontation, but they can be unpredictable. Do not corner a mountain lion.
- Do not run. Running may stimulate the lion's instinct to chase. Face the animal and stand upright. Make eye contact. Do not turn your back on the mountain lion. Hold your ground or back away slowly.

- Pick small children up and place on your shoulders. Spread your arms, open your coat, and try to make yourself appear larger.
- Do not crouch down or bend over, for you will look like a four-legged prey animal.
- If the lion behaves aggressively, wave your hands, shout and throw sticks or rocks. The idea is to convince the mountain lion that you are not prey but that you may be dangerous.
- If attacked, fight back. Do not "play dead."

Report all mountain lion sightings to a park ranger, park headquarters or by calling (530) 242-3431.

Front
length 3"
width 3.5"



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