



**There are simple and cost effective ways to avoid the loss of pets and livestock to mountain lions.**

**These methods will also keep your family and neighbors safer.**

#### **Keep Your Pets Safe**

Cats and dogs are easy prey. Keep your pets indoors or secure them in a covered run.

If you allow your pets to roam, keep in mind that you are risking their lives— just as city-dwellers take a risk in letting their pets play near a busy street.

#### **Do Not Feed Wildlife**

Feeding wildlife such as deer, opossums, or raccoons only attracts predators to your home and creates a safety risk.

Make sure that food set out for pets, livestock, or birds is accessible only to the animals that you are trying to feed.

Fence in vegetable and fruit gardens that might attract wildlife.

Landscape your yard with plants that deer do not like to eat.

#### **Install Frightening Devices**

Mountain lions depend on surprise to catch their prey.

Installing either motion or timer-activated outdoor lighting around your home and animal enclosures may keep mountain lions away.

You might also try loud noises, sprinklers, or other frightening devices, such as those used to keep birds out of fields.

#### **Build Livestock Enclosures**

The best protection measure is to secure livestock in fully enclosed barns, pens, or sheds. Openings, such as windows, doors, or large gaps, are attractants and might provide access for highly curious lions.

If covering your pen is not an option then you must build a tall fence. Fences should be at least 10 feet high, constructed of either heavy woven wire or alternating hot and grounded electric wires. Adding a wire mesh overhang or an electric wire of at least 5,000 volts at the top of the fence may prevent lions from climbing over.

Be sure to place all livestock enclosures, both covered and open, away from any trees or brush that lions might climb or hide within.



#### **Protect Vulnerable Animals**

Lions are attracted by the smell of blood. Keep injured animals, or livestock nearing and following birth, in fully enclosed structures.

Immediately remove and destroy afterbirth, carcasses, and other animal by-products from areas near livestock enclosures or homes.

It appears that mountain lions are most likely to be tempted by domestic animals in the spring when the deer herds are migrating.

#### **Use Guard Animals**

Guard dogs specifically bred to protect livestock from predators have been used for thousands of years in Europe.

Studies conducted in Colorado, Montana, Utah and Idaho show that properly trained livestock guard dogs reduced predation by as much as 93 percent.

Guard dogs are not pets, and must be specially raised and trained in order to be effective. They may also pose a risk to people, and are best suited to large herds in remote locations.

Guard animals — such as llamas and donkeys — are more effective against coyotes than lions. Horned cattle are also being used in some ranching operations as a deterrent to predators.



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## Lions and Livestock Losses

Unlike wild animals, most livestock do not have the skills to protect themselves. Thousands of years of breeding have made domestic animals dependent on people for protection.

In the United States, livestock owners have traditionally turned to government agencies to kill wildlife which threaten livestock production. However, statistics show that even when lions are killed on a property year after year, livestock losses still continue.

Young, inexperienced lions—the ones that are more likely to prey on livestock—move into vacant territories and continue the cycle of killing and being killed.

Where older lions are skilled in taking their preferred prey—deer—livestock kills are less likely to occur. Some ranchers say that the best protection they have from mountain lions is to have an old experienced male lion established somewhere on the ranch.

Even completely eliminating lions from a geographic region will not prevent depredation. If there are no lions to live in the territory, other predators, particularly coyotes, will fill the space.

Killing a lion for preying on livestock does not reverse or compensate the livestock loss, does not prevent future losses and costs taxpayer dollars for the kill.



## Mountain Lion Facts

Mountain lions are calm, quiet, and elusive.

An opportunistic hunter, mountain lions eat prey that is familiar and easily available. They hunt alone from dusk to dawn, taking their prey—primarily deer—from behind.

A mountain lion may kill a deer every one-to-four weeks. They often drag their kill to another area and then cover it with dry leaves, grass or pine needles, to protect it from other animals and to reduce spoilage. A lion can be expected to return to the kill several times to feed.

Mountain lions prefer areas with dense undergrowth and cover, and will leave an area where they perceive a threat.

The home territories of mountain lions can cover hundreds of square miles. Although lions are solitary unless mating or accompanied by their young, their territories will often overlap those of the opposite sex, and only occa-

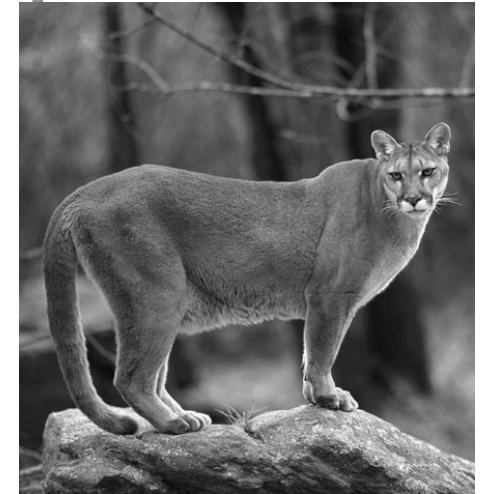
sionally overlap with those of the same sex.

While many people believe that populations of mountain lions are increasing, and that fewer lions are being killed than ever before, scientific research does not bear this out.

**Scientific Name:** Puma concolor

**Common Names:** Mountain lion, cougar, panther, puma, and many more.

# Protecting Pets & Livestock In Lion Country



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