**COUGAR: American Lion**

**A Wild Information & Activity Guide for Human Kids**

**Cougars**

Cougars (mountain lions) do not live only in the mountains. They can be found in both hot and cold climates, from sea level to over 11,000 feet. Cougars live in deserts, swamps, forests, coastal and interior foothills, and mountains. They once roamed most of North and South America. But in the United States today, they are found in only 14 western states. East of the Mississippi River, only 80-100 Florida panthers (among the most endangered animals in the world) are still living in Florida’s Everglades.

There are "lions" that live in the ocean, but they are neither cats, nor lions, nor related to mountain lions. Do you know what kind of "lions" these are?

**Wild & Solitary**

Adult cougars in the wild live solitary lives, alone most of the time. An adult mountain lion roams a "home range" that is often hundreds of square miles in size. Alone, they hunt, rest, sleep, seek mates and raise their cubs.

**Biologists call the mountain lion Puma concolor, Latin for "cat of one color." The Cherokee Indians call it Klandagi, "Lord of the Forest." In the U.S. today, we usually call it mountain lion, puma, cougar, or panther. In the dictionary it is listed under more names than any other animal in the world!**

Hidden in the puzzle on the right are fourteen names for this elusive animal. See if you can discover the wild, solitary MOUNTAIN LION, ONCA PARDA, KLANDAGI, PUMA CONCOLOR, GHOST CAT, PANTHER, PAINTER, CATAMOUNT, COUGAR, TYGER, LEOPARDO, AMERICAN LION, PUMA and LEON. Good luck!

**Teen Puma, cougar guide, says:**

"Most cougars prefer to avoid human beings. If you happen to see a cougar, do not approach it. Give it time & space to steer clear of you."

**There are 37 species of cats in the world. Can you name six?**

Teen Puma, cougar guide, says:

"Always take a friend with you when you camp, hike or backpack in wild areas."

Cougars’ tails are very large (over a third of a cougar’s length from nose to end of tail), and provide excellent control and balance when running, leaping or turning.

**Can You Find the Catamount?**

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**Additional Information can be obtained by contacting:**

The Mountain Lion Foundation
A nonprofit, environmental organization dedicated to the protection of wildlife & the preservation of wildlife habitat.

PO Box 1996, Sacramento, CA 95812

916/442-2066

http://www.mountainlion.org

"Saving America's Lion"
Cat Tracks

This is the track of a cougar’s left front paw. Unlike people and bears, a cougar walks upright on its toes. When Coyotes, wolves and dogs travel, they usually trot. But a cougar usually walks through life. If the surface that a cougar walks over is soft or moist dirt, it will leave clear, uniform TRACKS with its feet. Webbed skin and fur between its toes means that a cougar moves very quietly. Its claws are normally kept in (retracted) when it walks.

The Natural Diet of Wild Cougars

The diet of cougars in the wild depends on what nature provides. Mountain lions are carnivorous (flesh-eating) mammals and rarely eat vegetation. White-tailed and mule deer are their primary prey in North America. It is more energy efficient to hunt and eat one large animal (deer, elk, wild hog) than several small ones. Cougars may feed on smaller animals like rabbits, hares, ground squirrels, birds, rodents, marmots, porcupines and beavers. Other prey can include bobcats, coyotes, bighorn sheep and livestock.

Leon Puma, cougar guide, says:
"Never run past or from a cougar. This triggers their instinct to chase. Also, don’t turn away, crouch down or bend over. When humans crouch or bend over they can resemble four-legged prey animals."

Leon Puma, cougar guide, says:
"Cougars may communicate by whistling."

Leon Puma, cougar guide, says:
"Are you a carnivore? Do you ever eat animals? Do you eat vegetation? Keep a written record of your daily diet. Include in it pictures of the different foods you eat (draw them or cut them out of magazines). Where and how did you "capture" these foods? How often do you and your parents "hunt" for food? What energy and skills do you use in obtaining food?"

Mountain Lion Mask

Easy instructions for a cool cougar mask!

1. Color it
2. Cut it out
3. Place over your face & mark where your eye holes should be
4. Glue or staple mask to cardboard or manilla folder
5. Cut or punch out small holes for your eyes
6. Glue, tape or staple pencil or stick to lower half of mask.