



MOUNTAIN LION FOUNDATION



EARTH DAY

Saving America's Lion

Mountain lions are the very essence of our disappearing wilderness.

The true health of lion populations in the United States is virtually unknown. We don't know how many there are, how many we are killing, or how many the ecosystem needs. Very few lions live a full natural lifespan. It's a difficult life fraught with lethal challenges.

Habitat Loss Every lion needs water, prey, shelter and the opportunity to mate. Many lion territories are fragmented and degraded by development, and hundreds of lions are killed on our roadways.

Clean natural water sources are few, and may diminish further as a result of climate change. Habitat loss and changing forest practices have reduced prey abundance.

And even when land may support a breeding population, lions may not be tolerated there. Presuming that mountain lions can thrive wherever water and deer exist fails to account for the very real habitat loss created by fear.

Poisons More and more lions suffer from household and commercial poisoning, primarily rodenticides (rat poisons) that make their way up the food chain. When a poisoned rat is eaten by a bobcat or coyote, that poisoned animal becomes easy prey for a lion. Lions are also affected by herbicides, lead ammunition and pollution.

Hunting Whether a mountain lion is killed for sport, for a trophy, or in retribution for livestock loss, it's still intentional hunting of an apex predator.

When lions are hunted for sport or trophy, livestock losses increase because of the population instability caused by killing the most stable lions. When lions are hunted in retribution because they have preyed on domestic animals, again the kill may increase conflicts; especially when young and untrained lions are orphaned and left to fend for themselves. Most importantly, the retaliation does nothing to resolve the underlying problem, which is the presence of unprotected pets and livestock in lion territories.

OVERALL We estimate that the number of mountain lions in the United States is very unlikely to exceed 30,000: about the same number of lions remaining in Africa, or the same as the human population of Laramie, Wyoming. It's not very many, certainly not a population robust enough to withstand the increasing threats and pressures on America's wildlife and natural landscape.

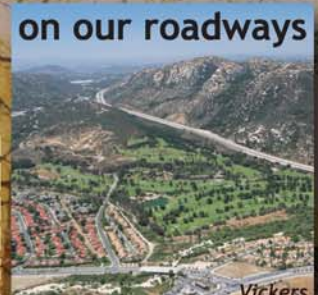
Recent research shows that lions can only recover from human-caused losses of 14% of a population in a single year. An ongoing 13% loss (see the chart below) is just at the edge of a crisis.

Isolated mountain lion populations continue to struggle for survival. Genetic anomalies have already been discovered in many populations and the gene pool is at serious risk.

If we hope to share our land with lions, at the very least we must immediately stop killing lions intentionally and work instead to reduce the human causes of conflicts. Only then can we be assured of Saving America's Lion for our children and grandchildren.



Anne-Marie Kalus



on our roadways



by toxins



for sport or trophy

KILLED

DYING

HUNTED



Linda Hertz

Cover photo by Anne-Marie Kalus



We now kill mountain lions at the highest rate in history, far more than as bounty a century ago.



Visit our website, volunteer, become a member and help spread the word about the American Lion!



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