MLF Introduces Innovative Neighborhood Wildlife Program

If you leave food out for your pets, you may be endangering a mountain lion as well.

Simple backyard decisions can have unintended consequences, causing damage or death to wild animals.

A new program of the Mountain Lion Foundation reaches neighborhoods “On the Edge” of mountain lion habitat.

Homeowners and renters can help mountain lions survive when they act responsibly to ensure the safety of their families, pets and livestock. The Mountain Lion Foundation is one of the first organizations to develop specific programs for this purpose.

MLF’s Program Director Michelle Cullens recently formed a coalition of like-minded organizations to help neighbors living on the urban edge cope with concerns about wildlife.

The pilot program is underway in Southern California’s Santa Monica Mountains, where lion populations have been severely reduced and isolated by loss of habitat and human encroachment into their territories.

In such places throughout the American West, mountains lions are killed daily because people believe that they pose a threat. Regardless of how realistic these fears may be, it is very clear that wildlife “conflicts” are primarily people problems.

Acts as mundane as covering a trash can, closing a doggy door at night, or cleaning a barbecue grill can save the life of a lion.

Lions are strictly carnivores, and the animals which appeal to them as prey include raccoons, opossums, and deer.

When prey animals find a feast at your home, predators like coyotes, bears and mountain lions may follow. Predators are often killed simply because they enter a populated area.

MLF’s “On the Edge” program focuses on this general – and practical – message: What we choose to do in our backyards can have profound effects on wildlife for miles around.

In just the first three months of “On the Edge”, neighborhood presentations have reached more than 300 people.

Backyard stories are illustrated with the help of non-releasable wild animals. They focus attention on common wildlife experiences, and how to enjoy nature without creating conflicts. Possums poke their heads out from an old aluminum garbage can, and a skunk rides in on a barbecue.

Lions are strictly carnivores, and
Director's Letter

Recently, the Mountain Lion Foundation received an angry e-mail from a (now) former member. I was struck by his passion for lions and his anger that we were not able to save a particular lion from slaughter by local law enforcement officials. It was an enormously frustrating case and heart-breaking for all of us.

The writer was taken aback by our request that he help us by calling local media, hanging door hangers, and reporting back to us. The gist of his message was that he has a job and was sending us money so we should do that work, not ask him to help.

We make no apology for asking our supporters to help. There are exactly three program staff at MLF and on any given day, on average throughout the West, more than 10 lions will be killed. If we relied on only ourselves, it’s hard to imagine how much worse the situation would be.

Without the 5,000 volunteers who gathered signatures on Prop 117, lions would still be trophy hunted in California. Without the 4-H kids in Plumas helping us with our Living with Lions predator-proof goat enclosures, the 200 people who have called for blueprints would never have had the opportunity. Without attorneys and scientists who donate countless hours, we'd never have been able to stop actions like Oregon’s experiment to shoot half the lions in two areas.

Without you as our eyes and ears and feet and ambassadors, our efforts would be hopelessly diminished. We acknowledge that many of you are busy and that you donate to MLF in hope that we can help where you cannot. We do our best to make each dollar, each action we take, not only save individual lions but also save the species. We get better at it each day.

But keep those cards and letters coming. Our staff successes do not mean that we will not be asking for your help. I promise you that we will and we must. It is the mountain lion’s only hope.

Recently, the Mountain Lion Foundation received an angry e-mail from a (now) former member. I was struck by his passion for lions and his anger that we were not able to save a particular lion from slaughter by local law enforcement officials. It was an enormously frustrating case and heart-breaking for all of us.

The writer was taken aback by our request that he help us by calling local media, hanging door hangers, and reporting back to us. The gist of his message was that he has a job and was sending us money so we should do that work, not ask him to help.

We make no apology for asking our supporters to help. There are exactly three program staff at MLF and on any given day, on average throughout the West, more than 10 lions will be killed. If we relied on only ourselves, it’s hard to imagine how much worse the situation would be.

Without the 5,000 volunteers who gathered signatures on Prop 117, lions would still be trophy hunted in California. Without the 4-H kids in Plumas helping us with our Living with Lions predator-proof goat enclosures, the 200 people who have called for blueprints would never have had the opportunity. Without attorneys and scientists who donate countless hours, we’d never have been able to stop actions like Oregon’s experiment to shoot half the lions in two areas.

Without you as our eyes and ears and feet and ambassadors, our efforts would be hopelessly diminished. We acknowledge that many of you are busy and that you donate to MLF in hope that we can help where you cannot. We do our best to make each dollar, each action we take, not only save individual lions but also save the species. We get better at it each day.

But keep those cards and letters coming. Our staff successes do not mean that we will not be asking for your help. I promise you that we will and we must. It is the mountain lion’s only hope.

Here are some of the volunteers and interns (in no particular order) who have gone way beyond the call of duty in the last few months. Without them, it is almost certain that more lions would have died. Janet Baker in Washington has attended endless meetings and written comments to stop the killing of mountain lions in the name of public safety. Carol McDonald in Sedona, AZ keeps us posted on events in the area and helped organize public appearances in Arizona.

OJ. Schubert is always there for lions in Arizona, most recently writing comments and helping coordinate the Arizona lawsuit. Susan Winston, accountant and wife of board member Winston Vickers, has agreed to provide pro bono accounting services. Attorneys at Farella, Braun + Martell have kept us out of trouble and provided wise counsel.

Sarah Reed, a UC Davis intern, analyzed livestock-lion conflicts in Northern California and co-authored a poster at the national Mountain Lion Workshop. Eric Roth, McGeorge law student, is providing legal research. Dallas Hughes is researching high road kill areas. Dozens of 4-H kids and parents helped build lion-proof pens. Lyn Whitcomb, is still hanging in there coordinating our outreach tabling in the Sacramento area.
Volunteers Kevin Wall, Justin Rathburn and Dave Shultis puzzled out lion proof pen plans and built the backbones of our pens. Rachel Cullens and Jessica Stryf helped coordinate several programs, workshops and media events.

This summer Pam Silva helped catch us up on files and data entry, Dave Shultis did data entry on the permits, Christa Mann, helped coordinate On the Edge in LA/Ventura and was pictured in the LA Times article. Kristina Swanson, researched the corridor portion of our "Non-acquisition Tools for Habitat Protection." Mollie Hogan, from Nature of Wild Works, does On the Edge programs, Pepe Bertocchi helped us set posts for the Plumas pen build, and the ever delightful Nikkema Taylor is helping with whatever needs doing until she moves to Los Angeles to advance her singing career.

Gift Memberships

If you know someone who supports mountain lions but has not yet taken steps to protect them, give a gift membership. If you are a current member, we will give your friends a one-year membership free. They will get the newsletter, alerts, invitations and all other information that regular members receive. Use the enclosed envelope to order.
Mountain Lion Foundation makes history again

This past May, the Mountain Lion Foundation hosted the first-ever conservation session held at a Mountain Lion Workshop. The Workshops, held roughly every four years since 1976 in various western states, are sponsored and organized by state wildlife agencies. As many long-time mountain lion activists know, the Mountain Lion Workshops have been a source of controversy in the conservation community.

Although it is the only conference held specifically to address scientific issues concerning mountain lions, its focus has traditionally been on management, which is still a synonym for killing, not conservation.

For example, when MLF Director Lynn Sadler was running Prop 117 and No on Prop 197, game managers who opposed those efforts used the publicity surrounding the Workshop to hype their message.

The previous six Workshops have notably lacked information and discussions on mountain lion conservation. For example, not one session—or even scientific paper—at the last Mountain Lion Workshop held in Austin, Texas, and attended by MLF Director Lynn Sadler, dealt with how to conserve lions.

Consequently, when MLF was notified last Fall that a new Mountain Lion Workshop was being planned, staff contacted the organizers at the Wyoming Game and Fish Department requesting a session on conservation. The agency agreed, and also suggested that MLF chair the session, drawing upon the many nationally recognized scientists with whom MLF works.

The conservation session was last in the schedule and was attended by hundreds of scientists, students and wildlife agency staff. Dr. Rick Hopkins presented "Mystery, Myth and Legend: The Politics of Cougar Management in the New Millennium," which debunked some of the fallacies involved with mountain lion management in the west.

In "Reconciling science and politics in puma management in the West: New Mexico as a template," Dr. Kenneth Logan reviewed the ecological importance of mountain lions as a keystone predator, discussed the threats to their long-term viability, the lack of scientifically defensible population estimates, and recommendations for future management and conservation.

MLF Director of Conservation Programs Michelle Cullens presented MLF's Living with Lions Program as an avenue for addressing human mountain lion conflicts in her talk titled "Community-based conservation of mountain lions."

Utah state graduate student Heather Keough presented "Puma management in western North America: a 100-year retrospective" which showed that more mountain lions are being killed today than ever before and argued that state wildlife agencies must shift to a conservation focus if self-sustaining populations of mountain lions are to continue. The talk was co-authored by California Department of Fish and Game biologist Steve Torres.

Finally, MLF Conservation Biologist Christopher Papouchis, who chaired the session, presented "Conserving mountain lions and bighorn sheep: reconciling an apparent disequilibrium" which focused on the biologically and politically complex issue of how to manage conflicts between mountain lions and bighorn sheep, and stated that adopting a holistic, ecosystem-level approach is the only viable long-term solution.

In addition, Michelle Cullens and Chris Papouchis presented a poster they co-authored with Sarah Reed, an MLF intern from UC Davis, on mountain lion-livestock conflicts in Northern California.

As an added bonus, Papouchis was asked to cap off another session on state status reports and highlighted the growing threats that the increasing killing of lions and expanding human development in the West poses to mountain lions. He advocated for regional collaboration among agencies, scientists, and conservation organizations.

Numerous scientists and agency personnel commended MLF staff for the quality and value of the session and the presentations. Several stressed the importance of raising concerns about conservation to a venue that has typically focused on management.

The Workshop brought to light how little is actually known about the status of mountain lion populations in the West, a fact that has now been largely acknowledged by state wildlife agencies. Other myths will fall under the weight of science.

For example, many game managers continue to equate any increase in reports of lion conflicts with "exploding" mountain lion populations, and give little or no consideration to the effects of increasing human populations, the effects of media reporting, or the effects of recreation in wilderness habitat.

In the meantime, conservation biologists look more and more to MLF to make sure their research gets accurately reflected in public policy while making it more difficult for the media to dismiss MLF as mere advocates who must defer to the "science" of the game managers. MLF will continue to promote conservation in the scientific community and give presentations on mountain lion conservation at scientific conferences around the country.
MLF Calls for Scientific Review of DFG Documents

MLF has formally asked that all public documents from the California Department of Fish and Game be reviewed for scientific accuracy and that all scientific documents be peer-reviewed.

MLF had hoped this would not be necessary in light of improved relationships with CDFG and conservation groups that can help guard against inaccuracies and mistakes. For example, CDFG had given MLF an opportunity to comment on their draft mountain lion brochure. MLF caught two statements that were contradictory to the department's own mountain lion expert's testimony and were able to correct them in time to release a good product. MLF has been told that they hand out more of the brochures than CDFC does. CDFC, MLF and — most importantly — lions were all winners in that interaction.

Recently, however, the CDFC spent untold thousands of dollars on a new posters called "Keep Me Wild." The theory behind the poster is excellent. It reflects, after all, exactly the concepts MLF has been calling for with its Living with Lions and On the Edge programs.

Unfortunately, the failure to have the posters reviewed by scientists or even the Department's own mountain lion expert, led to a most egregious error.

The posters actually imply that if a lion that eats something besides deer, it becomes a public safety risk. Not only is this completely without scientific merit, it perpetuates an attitude that causes citizens to kill lions that permittees have told us they would not otherwise kill.

Both the nation's leading researcher on lion attacks, as well as the Department's own mountain lion expert, have written objections to this language and both express concern that it could cause undue public alarm and bad management decisions leading to the death of more lions. This is a tragic waste. What should have been an excellent public information tool cannot be used by serious conservation advocates. In a time when the state is facing enormous budget cuts, it is heartbreaking to see dollars and paper thrown down the drain.

It is positively horrifying to think that more lions could be killed as a result of a poster that was ostensibly designed to protect wildlife.

MLF urges you to keep an eye out for these posters and request they be removed as soon as possible. MLF has asked the Department to recall these posters and to correct their website. This kind of fear-mongering has no role in the conservation of mountain lions.

We also urge you to send a letter to CDFC asking that they establish protocols for expert review and scientific peer review. The address is Robert Hight, Director, Department of Fish and Game, 1416 Ninth Street, Sacramento, California 95814.

States other than California also consistently fail to provide for proper review. If you live outside California, write to your wildlife agency, citing the California example as a warning.

You win some and then you have to win some more

As you know, a federal court recently stopped the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) from proceeding with an elk population "study" that involved killing at least half the mountain lions in two regions of Oregon.

Regardless, nine animal protection and conservation organizations were forced to file another legal complaint in Arizona over yet another federally funded fake science project.

That three-year, federally-funded study seeks to kill 75% of the mountain lions within the study area, and to capture up to 15 bighorn sheep several times a year with nets fired from helicopters.

The Arizona plan purported to "study" the declining bighorn sheep population by killing the majority of mountain lions in southeastern Arizona.

MLF members are familiar with attempts to pit bighorn sheep against mountain lions, as if the two were not dependent upon each other. Scientists Hall Sawyer and Fred Lindzey summarize the situation well when they state, "Predator control is a tempting window dressing for agencies under political pressure and does not address any of the more prevalent problems... associated with the declines in bighorn sheep population."

The suit was filed by Mountain Lion Foundation, The Fund for Animals, Animal Defense League of Arizona, The Humane Society of the United States, Forest Guardians, Center for Biological Diversity, Animal Protection Institute, Arizona, Wildlife Damage Review, and Flagstaff Activist Network. The groups are represented by the public interest law firm Meyer & Glitzenstein.
California District Attorneys Association Wins Anti-Poaching Award

The Mountain Lion Foundation has awarded the Margaret Owings prize for the practitioners who do the most to fight wildlife poaching crimes to the California District Attorneys' Association for their Circuit Prosecutor Project.

"Wildlife poaching is second only to drug running in illegal profits in California," said Lynn Sadler, Director of the Foundation. "The Circuit Prosecutor Project has made it clear that poaching crimes are serious offenses that warrant serious punishment."

The Circuit Prosecutors' Project provides seven "circuit riders" to provide experienced attorneys to rural counties to handle complex environmental cases.

"These prosecutors are doing cases not done four or five years ago," commented Gale Filter, Environmental Project Director of the District Attorney's Association. "They have been embraced by not only counties but also wardens and other concerned citizens who value wildlife."

At any given time, the project has 90-100 active cases, the majority of which relate to wildlife and habitat. Since its inception in 1998, the Circuit Prosecutor Project has handled more than 900 major environmental cases and obtained more than $22 million in penalties, fines and costs.

"This project has raised the level of consciousness of the public, but also the level of confidence in law enforcement," according to Larry Allen, Circuit Prosecutor in the Redding office. "Wardens and local DAs are becoming interested in prosecuting wildlife crimes because they know someone will be backing them up on these complex and difficult cases."

The Foundation also commended the Association for its leadership in sponsoring AB 1599 (McLeod), legislation which would have allowed prison time for commercial poaching. Although the bill stalled, more than 800 support letters were sent, escalating public awareness of the depth of poaching problems.

CDAA staff state that MLF's award, "Maggie" as they affectionately call the fine bronze sculpture by Dwight Lutzey, has been a good luck charm for them because it was the first of several prestigious awards.

They have recently received the US EPA Achievement award in recognition of "exceptional work and commitment to the environment," a U.S. Congressional Award for "outstanding and invaluable service," and the American Bar Association Award for Distinguished Achievement in Environmental Law and Policy.

Donate your old car or boat and help save lions.

Call 916/442-2666
Continued from page 1

"On the Edge" program, which also spreads the message through print and broadcast media and by contact with community leaders.

A dozen newspaper articles have echoed the conservation message, including a half-page color article in the Los Angeles Times. Press coverage has included specific concerns of the coalition partner organizations: Mountain Lion Foundation, Mountains Restoration Trust, California Wildlife Center, Nature of Wild Works, and the South Coast Wildlands Project.

Cable programming and public service announcements are also part of the program.

"On the Edge" and the Mountain Lion Foundation have received California State Senate commendations for the model effort.

Agencies such as the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area, Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy, California State Parks, the City and County of Los Angeles, and the City of Calabasas have encouraged expansion of the program.

People can enjoy living next to wilderness without having nature move into their homes. And by respecting wildlife habitat, residents can maintain a community’s character for generations to come. The presence of mountain lions is vital to conservation in the American West.

MLF’s Living With Lions project, and its urban component On the Edge, is made possible thanks to the generous support of the Richard and Rhoda Goldman Fund, the Thelma Doelger Fund for Animals, The National Wildlife Federation, the Giles W. and Elise G. Mead Foundation, the Wendy P. McCaw Foundation and from the individual contributions of Mountain Lion Foundation members.

Concerned about your wild neighbors?

ON THE EDGE
People and Wildlife Programs
Partial 2003 Schedule

Programs are strictly for adults and children over 12 years unless otherwise noted.

Thursday, August 21st, 7:00 pm
Franklin Canyon Park Auditorium
2600 Franklin Canyon Dr., Beverly Hills
Call 310.858.7272 for directions

Saturday, September 20th, 10:00 am
Adults and Kids at the Amphitheater
Oak Canyon Community Park
5600 Hollytree Drive, Oak Park
Call 805.584.4400 for directions

Friday, October 10, 7:00 pm
Duttons Bookstore, Brentwood
Call 916.442-2666 x 107 for directions.

Thursday, November 6th, 7:00 pm
Topanga Community House
14400 N. Topanga Cyn. Blvd., Topanga
Call 310.455.1980 for directions

Or contact 916-442-2666 for directions, more information or to contribute to any of these programs.
Transitions
Mountain Lion Researcher Ian Ross Mourned

The Mountain Lion Foundation was saddened to learn of the tragic and untimely death of Canadian researcher Ian Ross. Ross, 44, well known throughout North America for his work with cougars, grizzly bears and other large predators, was killed on June 29th in a plane crash while tracking lions in Kenya.

Ross, along with long-time research partner Martin Jalkotzy, ran the wildlife consulting firm Arc Wildlife Services and conducted the most comprehensive mountain lion study in Canada. The project, eventually titled Getting Along With the Neighbors: The Cougar as Peaceful Adversary, spanned 14-years and considered mountain lion population characteristics, food habits and habitat use.

While many researchers shy away from advocating for conservation, Ross made frequent presentations to the public on the ecological importance of large predators and how to coexist with them. During his tenure with Alberta Fish and Wildlife he helped convince the Alberta government to create a cougar wildlife management plan to control hunting.

Ross was well respected by conservation advocates and researchers alike. In an email to MLF, Mountain lion expert Harley Shaw noted that Ross "had a rare combination of an ability to maintain high quality in his work without losing his sense of humor or his concern for his friends."

MLF conservation biologist Chris Papouchis said, "It's rare to find a scientist as passionate and outspoken about conservation as Ian was. His death is a tragic blow to the effort to conserve mountain lions in North America." MLF extends our sympathies to Ross's family and friends.

Ken Logan to Head Up Mountain Lion Research in Colorado

Ken Logan, one of the nation's top mountain lion experts, has taken a position with the Colorado Division of Wildlife as their carnivore research specialist. Logan, who most recently worked with his wife and long-time research partner Linda Sweanor for the University of California at Davis studying lions in southern California, will be responsible for designing a comprehensive mountain lion research project for Colorado.

CDOW opened the position only after a number of conservation groups, including MLF, argued to the Colorado Wildlife Commission that there was insufficient data to support hunting quotas of 790 for lions in the state. Only one extensive lion study has been conducted in Colorado, and was limited to selected areas on the western slope of the Colorado Rockies. The commission agreed that research was lacking, and instructed CDOW to hire a research specialist to study mountain lions.

"It's hard to imagine how they could have chosen better than Ken," said MLF Executive Director Lynn Sadler. "His presence will undoubtedly aid efforts to develop a sound scientific basis for conservation."

Logan is perhaps best known for his 10-year study of mountain lions in New Mexico, conducted with Sweanor, that culminated in their book Desert Puma: Evolutionary Ecology and Conservation of an Enduring Carnivore. MLF wishes Ken and Linda all the best in their move.
Shopping Mall

Try this look on for size on any or all of your favorite items!

**T-shirt** - 100% cotton 6.1 ounce T-shirt that is natural color with a full front image of the MLF message. Children sizes: M, L, XL Adult sizes: S-2XL. $15.00

**Convention Tote Bag** - Natural color with the MLF logo. Bag dimensions are 14”wx14”hx3”d, 12 ounce cotton canvas, cotton web handles. Perfect to take to the farmers market. $10.00

**Ceramic Coffee Mug** - Enjoy your 10-oz. cup of coffee while helping save America’s Lion. $8.00

**Mouse Pad** - Feel better while working by showing your coworkers that you support the Lions. $7.00

All prices include shipping, handling and any applicable tax.

Use the enclosed envelope.

---

**Little Cats**, Bobbie Kahlman
$3.00

Young readers will enjoy reading about all the cats in the small cat family.

---

**Voice From the Sea**, Margaret Owings
$20.00

MLF Founder Margaret Owings final work is an inspiring compilation of prose, poetry and drawings from through out her career.

---

**Desert Puma**, Ken Logan and Linda Sweanor
$45.00

The most detailed assessment ever produced of the biology and ecology of mountain lions. A powerful contribution to cougar conservation.

---

**Wild Cats of the World**, Mel and Fiona Sunquist
$45.00

Everything you ever wanted to know about every cat on earth in one book that is pretty to look at and fun to read.

---

**Spirit of the Rockies**, Tom Mangelson and Cara Shea Blessley
$20.00

Chronicles a Jackson Hole lioness and her three cubs in beautiful photographs and text.

---

**Mountain Lion: An unnatural history of pumas and people**, Chris Bolgiano
$20.00

A history of the mountain lion lurking across our physical and cultural landscapes.
Practical Tips from On The Edge

MLF has excerpted this section from an On the Edge presentation. References to specific localities were removed so that this information may be applied wherever people live On the Edge.

Inviting wildlife into your yard can be a wonderful thing. But there are some important facts to keep in mind when you consider making your yard friendly to wild animals.

First and foremost, we can most effectively help wildlife by making it possible — through protection of their natural habitat — for them to sustain themselves.

When people alter the food chain, changes occur through many layers of life in your neighborhood. The causes and effects may not be obvious. It is our responsibility to consider all of the possible results of our actions.

It doesn’t make sense to directly feed any animal that is able to feed itself in the natural environment: the food we can offer is not nearly as healthy. We may change patterns of animal behavior in ways we do not understand, or even make animals unnecessarily dependent upon us.

It does make sense to landscape with native plants that provide natural sources of food and shelter for wildlife, or to provide food or water sources directly to species like songbirds, when scientists tell us that the species’ numbers are declining because they are challenged to find natural sources.

But how do we get to know all that? Well, if you choose to restore your property so that it is truly friendly to wildlife, you are taking on a responsibility that requires a long term commitment. You will need to learn about the many kinds of animals that inhabit your neighborhood, and the local availability of the sources of food, water and shelter on which they depend. You will need to know something about animal behavior. You will need to learn when, and what methods are appropriate, to provide for wildlife in your area.

Finally, you will want to take a good look at yourself. Only you know the degree to which you are willing to live with — to welcome or to tolerate — wildlife in your backyard.

Some people may draw the line at butterflies. Those folks might want to reconsider living in the hills!

Others might welcome hummingbirds, and plant native flowers to attract them, or make a commitment to clean and refill a hummingbird feeder every other day.

Some people might decide not to set out a bird feeder, because they do not want to deal with the inevitable, mischievous, and sometimes destructive, squirrels. Or because they, or their neighbors, have cats that roam outdoors, that would threaten the birds. Or because they do not have the time, money, or interest to keep a birdfeeder clean and full of seed.

Some people might fence and secure only a small portion of their yard, restoring the rest to the wild, and enjoy the whole pageant of wildlife that passes by.

These are choices: and they are more about us than they are about the animals.

There are a couple of caveats too: it is never appropriate, and it is illegal and very dangerous, to feed a predator like a bobcat, fox, coyote, bear, or mountain lion. It is never appropriate to feed animals like raccoons, opossums, or deer, all prey animals that may attract a predator into your neighborhood. While you may be willing to tolerate the presence of large predators at your home, your neighbors probably are not, and their call to a government agency may result in the death of the coyote, lion, or bear.

Conflicts with wildlife are primarily caused by inappropriate human behavior.

So, think your actions all the way through. When you act on behalf of wildlife, be sure to create the effect you intend.

So what do we do when we find a wild animal that appears to be injured or abandoned?

The first rule of animal rescue: Most times the best thing to do, is to do nothing. The baby bird you “rescue” may simply be learning how to fly.

Fledging birds that have feathers and a short tail spend a few days on the ground learning to fly while their parents con-Continued on back page
WildNeighbors

If you are lucky enough to live near land that still supports wildlife, there is a chance that you may see or meet one of your neighbors, the mountain lion.

Good Neighbors

When neighbors make an honest effort to know and respect each other, it can make a difference in the lives of all inhabitants of a neighborhood, both wild and human. Being an aware and considerate neighbor is one of the best ways to keep a naturally diverse community safe for all its residents. Educate yourself and others about local wildlife and its behavior. Your neighbors are counting on you not to attract wildlife to your neighborhood.

Although they now persist in only 12 states, mountain lions called all of North America home for more than 100,000 years. Also known as cougars and pumas, they are solitary and elusive animals which is why most people live and recreate in lion country without ever seeing one. Although they play a keystone role in healthy ecosystems, population numbers are unknown. It is important that we educate ourselves about mountain lions and all wildlife. Learning to be a good neighbor, to live and let live, can help ensure that future generations, wild and human, all survive and thrive, side by side, as neighbors.

For technical assistance, blueprints for lion proof enclosures, presentations in your neighborhood, or more information, contact

Mountain Lion Foundation
phone: 916/442-2666
mail: PO Box 1896, Sacramento, CA 95812
email: mlf@mountainlion.org web: www.mountainlion.org

Listed below are many ways that you can be a good neighbor, respecting and protecting both human and wild residents of your community.

Living in Lion Country

Don't feed wildlife. And don't leave pet food outside. Both can attract cougars by attracting prey animals. Wildlife agencies rarely relocate cougars who come into contact with humans, opting instead to shoot them.

Landscape for safety. Remove plants that attract wildlife (deer, raccoons, etc.). Wildlife attracts its natural predator — the cougar. Remove dense and low-lying vegetation that offers cover for cougars; make it difficult for cougars to approach your home and yard unseen.

Keep pets safe. Don't allow your pets to roam unattended. Bring them inside or secure them in a kennel. Loose pets are easy prey.

Confine and secure livestock. When possible, secure livestock in enclosed barns and sheds at night.

Supervise children. Keep your children safe. Teach them about cougars and other wildlife that they might encounter. Watch over them when they are outdoors, especially between dusk and dawn.

Encountering Mountain Lions

Pay attention. Always be aware of your surroundings, adjusting your behavior and attending to children accordingly.

Never approach a cougar. Mountain lions usually prefer to avoid humans. If you observe or encounter a cougar, give it the time and space to avoid you and a confrontation.

Stay calm. Face the animal, make eye contact, and stand your ground. Try to convince the cougar that you are not prey and may be dangerous. Open your jacket and raise your arms to appear larger and aggressive. Throw whatever you can reach without turning your back or crouching — rocks, branches, implements. Slowly wave your arms and speak in a firm, loud voice.

Maintain eye contact. Even if you must pick up children, do not turn away, bend over or squat down. Doing so causes humans to resemble four-legged prey animals. Remain standing, do not turn away.

Never run past or from a cougar. This may trigger its instinct to chase prey. Stand your ground.

Bring a friend. When in cougar habitat, always hike, backpack, and camp with a companion. Keep children close at hand, and within your sight at all times.

Fight back. Try to remain standing, protect your head and neck, and fight back with whatever is at hand. People have successfully fended off cougars using rocks, garden implements, tree branches, and clothing.
continue to feed them. If a young bird is uninjured and can stand or hop, it should be left alone. Do keep your cats and dogs inside, and remove other nearby dangers, until the baby can truly take wing.

Keep in mind that a large percent of baby animals die in the wild during their first year. Adult animals become injured and are susceptible to disease, they age, and they die. All this is part of the natural order of things, and assures that the survivors are healthy, strong, and able. That animal may provide the food that will keep another animal alive.

If you find a bird or animal that you believe may be injured, sick or orphaned, call the nearest wildlife center. They can walk you through the process of determining whether and how to help it.

If the bird or animal is in immediate danger from people, pets, or cars, it is better to remove the danger than to move the animal. Keep people quiet and at a distance. Shut down any machinery. Bring your pets and children indoors. Only if the animal is on a busy street, sidewalk, or construction area should you consider moving it. If you do so, move it only so far that it is out of immediate danger. Never touch an animal with bare hands. Never get within biting or scratching distance.

Bats, bobcats, bears, mountain lions, coyotes, foxes, badgers, deer, raccoons, skunks, sea mammals, and large birds of prey should never be moved, except by people specifically trained to do so.

When it is absolutely necessary, you may choose to move a small bird, opossum, rabbit, or squirrel. If in doubt, don’t move it.

If you must move a wild bird or animal, wear protective clothing, and wash your hands before and after handling. Do not feed it or give it water. Place the animal in an escape proof, ventilated box or animal carrier lined with a towel or soft cloth. Cover the container with a light cloth and place it in a warm, dark, quiet place, away from pets and people, especially children. If the animal is chilled, wrap a bottle filled with hot water in a towel, and place it next to the animal. Then call the nearest wildlife center or veterinarian for further instructions.