



MOUNTAIN LION FOUNDATION

Saving America's Lion

August 31, 2016

RE: Comments on the 2016-2017 Cougar Hunting Season Proposal

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Dear Utah Wildlife Board,

The Mountain Lion Foundation submits the following comments on behalf of our supporters in Utah regarding the State's declining cougar population and concerns over irresponsible sport hunting quotas. We urge you to reject the proposed cougar recommendations. Please include this letter in the official record.

End the 'Unlimited' Mortality Quota.

Currently there is no reliable estimate of the number of cougars in Utah. Allowing potentially every cougar in a specific region to be killed is not only scientifically unsound, but it's completely reckless. It also sends the message that cougars have no value and that the goal is to eliminate the species from these areas of the State. Please immediately end this unsustainable and negligent policy of allowing unlimited mortality in CG-1002, 1007, and 1017. Please also lower quotas in the remaining regions by at least thirty percent to maintain ecologically-effective populations.

Cougars are Self-Regulating and Not a Major Threat to Livestock or Ungulates.

Mountain lions are an essential apex predator, an iconic species who vitally contributes to healthy and balanced ecosystems. We are only just beginning to understand this complex and elusive species' social and familial behaviors, and what we do know demonstrates that mountain lions are highly intelligent, sensitive and much more dependent upon family units than previously thought. When these family groups are disrupted, conflicts with people, domestic animals and native ungulates actually become worse. The best management strategy is to strictly limit human-caused cougar mortality and let the population naturally stabilize with its environment. We encourage you to utilize the best available, peer-reviewed research by limiting all human-caused mortality to no more than twelve percent of the cougar population. Genuine concerns for ungulate populations should focus on reducing trophy hunting, preventing disease transmission from domestic herds, and protecting and connecting vital habitats. Killing cougars is not a solution. Please reject the current proposal.

Thank you.

Amy Rodrigues
Conservation Biologist