



MESSAGE FROM MARSHA
House District 19, State Representative

MOUNTAIN LION SIGHTINGS ON THE PLAINS

When we think of mountain lions we assume they live in the mountains, right? Not necessarily so, according to local District Wildlife Manager Jeremy Huntington with the Colorado Division of Wildlife (DOW). “In the past few weeks we’ve received numerous reports of mountain lion sightings between Black Forest and Calhan.” However, DOW has many reports of feral dogs in the area, which contributed to some of the attacks on livestock and pets in the area.

While it is uncommon for mountain lions to frequent the eastern plains, it is not unlikely or impossible to see one along the fringes of the Palmer Divide. A DOW officer confirmed one particular sighting, northeast of Black Forest, last week. Mountain lions can have extremely large home ranges, meaning they can roam miles in search of new food sources or mates. This is especially common in young male mountain lions, which are forced to leave their mother at about 18 months old and find a new place to live.

Mountain lions can remain as a permanent resident of the eastern plains of Colorado if they find enough food and cover. The main food source for these predators is deer, but turkey, elk and other animals can be likely prey.

Mountain lions typically stalk or ambush their prey, using trees, rock outcroppings or steep hillsides as hiding spots. Along the mountainous borders of subdivisions in Colorado Springs, some mountain lions have learned to prey on domestic pets, particularly outdoor housecats.

What does this mean to homeowners and ranch operators in this area? First thing to remember is not to panic. Typically these cats are nocturnal and solitary in nature. Most of the sighting reports received by the DOW are from citizens who catch a glimpse of one on the road or in the back pasture at night, never to be seen again. Hesitant to approach humans, these animals have been known to avoid a 10 lb poodle, if it's barking loud enough.

One of the most common questions the DOW receives about lions pertains to **THE RIGHT A CITIZEN HAS TO PROTECT THEMSELVES AND THEIR PROPERTY.**

The DOW offers this information to residents that live in lion country: Any lion that poses a threat or risk of death, damage or injury to humans, livestock, motor vehicles or real property can be killed by a citizen without a license to do so. Any taking of a mountain lion under this provision must be reported to the Division of Wildlife within five days. The DOW will conduct an on-site follow up to ensure the above criteria are met.

The DOW has wildlife officers on-call and available 24-7, and they recommend calling immediately if a lion displays any type of aggressive behavior.

Ranching operations are also eligible for compensation for damages to livestock caused by mountain lions or bears. While there are many regulations pertaining to this process, the DOW's game damage program does offer compensation for livestock killed by bear or mountain lion. Consultation with a District Wildlife Manager is required to start that process.

Wildlife Officer Jeremy Huntington can provide assistance to landowners that might have issues with mountain lion predation on their land. He can be reached at 719-227-5283, or if an immediate response is needed by DOW officer contact the Colorado State patrol dispatch @ 719-544-2424 any time, day or night.

The DOW can provide information or assistance to anyone that has wildlife issues or questions. Wildlife officials also ask the community to do their part in co-existing with wildlife. Things like storing trash, birdseed, livestock feed in secure areas will help prevent unwanted wildlife encounters. For more information, please contact Jeremy Huntington.

Please join Jeremy and me on Monday, November 19th at 6:30pm at Discovery High School in Widefield, or November 20th at 6:30pm at Ellicott High School to discuss Mtn. Lions, Toll Roads, Water, Taxes and More!
Please join me as I will be discussing the upcoming session and the bills I will be sponsoring in behalf of the citizens of House District 19. Your opinion is very important and appreciated!

Please visit www.gomarsha.org for previous messages that include descriptions of tax issues, benefits available for our military and more. If you have any questions or comments please contact me anytime at MarshaLooper@hughes.net or call me at 719-238-5600. Thank you for the privilege to serve you!

Sincerely,

Marsha Looper,
Colorado House of Representatives, HD 19