

What are the threats to the mountain lion in Texas?

**Habitat fragmentation:** This is the number one enemy of the mountain lion.

**Predator control:** Unbridled predator control, both government and privately sponsored, is one of the biggest killers of cats in this state.

**Passive wildlife management:** There are more scientifically based methods of maintaining mountain lion populations than estimating health by tracking mortalities and sightings, a practice some mountain lion experts have called "useless".

**Human emotion:** We need to base decisions on facts, not emotionally-charged rhetoric.

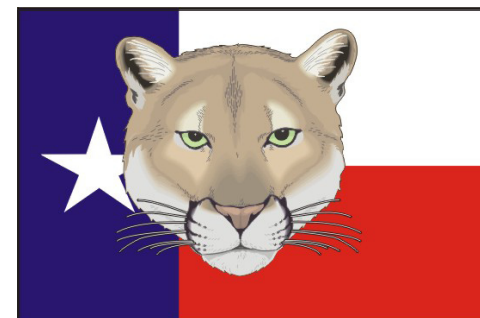
The mountain lion in Texas isn't endangered, but he is misunderstood and mismanaged. The cats are classified as "unprotected, non-game" animals by Texas Parks & Wildlife, meaning that they can be killed by anyone, at any time, and for any reason. In the words of one official, "Mountain lions get about as much protection as cockroaches."

No one knows how many mountain lions there are in the state. Lion populations are tracked by reported mortalities and by sightings. Yet, there are almost no state laws requiring reporting of mountain lion kills; and sightings, even when they are verified and most are not, raise more questions than answers. Together, these techniques add up to something called "post management". The problem with this approach is that we will never know the mountain lion population is in trouble until it's too late.

Only you can protect Mountain Lions!

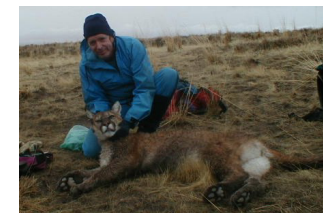
Let's Talk About Texas'

# Mountain Lions



Working to raise awareness about the mountain lion in Texas.

Andy Foster  
15602 Pilgrim Hall Drive  
Friendswood, Texas 77058  
e-mail: [cougar@theandyzone.com](mailto:cougar@theandyzone.com)  
[www.theandyzone.com/cougar](http://www.theandyzone.com/cougar)



## The Mountain Lion



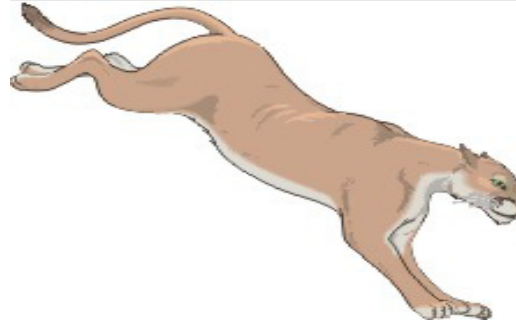
A young male in Idaho crawling away after being radio collared. This cat was killed to protect big horn sheep.

**Physical characteristics:** Sports a yellowish to tawny fur overcoat above a white fur belly. The backs of the ears and two whisker patches tend to be dark. The cat is unspotted except when young. All have a long tail sporting a black tip. Length: 59 to 108 inches, including the tail, which is generally 21 to 36 inches long. Wt: 75-200 lbs, normally 100-150 lbs. Shoulder height: 28 inches

**Life Cycle:** Lives about ten years in the wild. Up to 25 years in captivity. Born at any time of the year. Litters arrive in batches of 2 to 6 kittens, 2 to 4 average. They nurse until 5 to 6 weeks of age. At 3 to 4 months, the family leaves the den. Kittens stay with the mother until they are one and half to two years old. Males become transient until established in a new home range.

**Home Ranges:** Males: 25 to 500 square miles. Females 8 to 400 square miles. Male home ranges do overlap females but not other males. Female home ranges generally do not overlap but may.

## Recommended Safety Tips



Below are general guidelines. **You** are responsible for your own safety in mountain lion country.

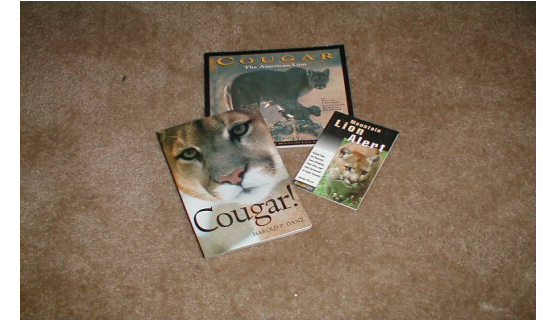
General rules for hiking in mountain lion country:

1. Do NOT take your pets!
2. Hike with someone! NEVER let children hike without an adult!
3. PICK UP A ROCK, STICK, OR ANYTHING TO USE AS A WEAPON BEFORE HIKING IN MOUNTAIN LION TERRITORY. People have fought off cats using sticks, rocks, jackets, caps, pocket knives, and cameras.

If a cat is approaching or within 50 feet:

1. DO NOT RUN!
2. MAINTAIN EYE CONTACT!
3. MAKE YOURSELF BIGGER! DO NOT BEND, SQUAT, OR LIE DOWN. IF YOU ARE SITTING, STAND UP! PICK CHILDREN UP and put them on your shoulders!
4. THROW ROCKS! THROW STICKS! HIT IT! YELL! SCREAM! MAKE NOISE! FIGHT BACK! Mountain lions attack to eat. Most attacks on people DO NOT result in death. Do not defend a pet!

## To Learn More



Good books on the mountain lions can be found at your local bookstore and on the Internet.

Recommended Books:

**Cougar, The American Lion by Kevin Hansen.** This out of print book is the best all around reference about mountain lions. ISBN # 0-87358-544-5

**Cougar! by Harold P. Danz.** A good reference to have because of its rich historical research. ISBN # 0-8040-1015-3.

**Mountain Lion Alert by Steve Torres.** An excellent pocket sized reference that tells how to behave and not to behave in "cat country". ISBN 1-56044-583-1

Recommended web sites:

**The Mountain Lion Foundation.**  
<http://www.mountainlion.org/index1.asp>

**The Cougar Zone.**  
<http://www.theandyzone.com/cougar>

**Texas Parks and Wildlife Mountain Lion Page.** <http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/nature/wild/mammals/mlion.htm>