



Mountain Lions in Redwood

Mountain lions (cougars) roam throughout Redwood National and State Parks. Although they have been spotted in picnic areas and along trails and roads, your chance of seeing one of these secretive animals is rare.

Mountain lions can be distinguished from bobcats by tail length; lion tail length is at least three-quarters the length of the body. Bobcat tails are much shorter relative to body length.

Any lion sighting should be reported to a ranger immediately. Mountain lions have been known to attack people and pets but the likelihood of encountering an aggressive lion is very remote.

Nonetheless, it is wise to be prepared. Avoid hiking alone. Watch children closely. Do not let them run ahead of you on the trail. Hikers in particular are encouraged to read the tips in this brochure carefully. Following these tips will allow both you and the mountain lions to coexist in the parks.

The reclusive behavior of mountain lions and their tendency to live in

Hiker Tips:

- Don't run. Mountain lions may chase things that run because they associate running with prey.

- Do not crouch down; try to appear as large as possible. Attempts to hide may be unsuccessful; mountain lions see most people long before people spot them.

- Hold your ground, or move away slowly while facing the lion.

- If you have little children with you, pick them up.

- If the lion behaves aggressively, wave your hands, shout, and throw sticks at it.

- If attacked, fight back.

- Report any lion sightings to a ranger immediately. Call 707.464.6101 or stop by park information centers in Orick and Crescent City.

remote areas explain why we know relatively little about these graceful cats. They once ranged from northern Canada through South America and from coast to coast; their range is now much reduced. No other land mammal in this hemisphere had a more extensive range. Primarily due to hunting and loss of habitat, mountain lions have been largely creatures of the West (in North America) since the 1920s.

The mountain lion is, for many, the quintessential symbol of wilderness: a large animal ranging freely in wild areas, independent of human interference. As the largest carnivore in the North Coast redwood parks, they are at the top of the food chain and therefore are an indicator of this ecosystem's health. In addition, they play an important role in maintaining balance within the ecosystem.

As you visit lion habitat, it is important that you understand the behaviors that these cats use to survive. You can then act accordingly to protect yourself and these animals in their native habitat.