



The Puma

The Puma is an extremely elusive animal and the chances of encountering one are very slim. It is important to remember that the puma plays an important role in our ecosystem. As a top predator, the Puma maintains a check on its main food source, the white-tailed deer.

What is a Puma?

The Puma is a cat also known in Ontario as cougar, mountain lion, or eastern panther. The Puma has more names than any other creature in the Western Hemisphere. The colour of the Ontario Puma may be brownish-gray like the white-tailed deer, reddish-brown like the moose or light beige like the woodland caribou. This colour adaptation helps when hunting prey. Its undersides, chin, throat, chest area and the sides of the jaw are all buff white. The back of its rounded ears and the tip of its long tail are black. Young Pumas up to six months old have black spots and streaked tails that fade as they grow older. Pumas may be 1.5 to 2.7 metres long and weigh between 35 and 100 kilograms.



What do Puma's eat?

The puma in Ontario will prey on white-tailed deer, moose, woodland caribou, beaver, hare, rabbit, grouse, skunk, woodchuck, and sometimes porcupine.

Where do Puma's Live?

The male Puma has a range of 150 to 1000 square kilometres while the female may have a range of only 65 to 500 square kilometres.

The Puma usually breeds in late winter or early spring. After a gestation period of three months the female gives birth to a litter of one to three kittens. The kittens are weaned at approximately three months and will stay with the mother for up to two years.

Co-existing with Pumas

The Puma is an extremely elusive animal and the chances of encountering one are very slim. However, Puma sightings in Ontario have increased dramatically over the past ten years and the Ontario Puma Foundation feels it is necessary to educate the public on co-existing with Pumas. Here are some suggestions to increase your safety in Puma country:

- Backpack, hike and camp with a companion in remote areas.
- Keep pets secure, preferably in a kennel with an enclosed roof. Keep pets inside at dawn and dusk and do not leave food outside that will attract prey animals.
- Do not approach a Puma. Pumas want to avoid humans, so leave space for them to make their escape.
- Educate your children about Pumas and other wildlife and supervise your children if they are outside at dawn and dusk.
- Never run away from or past a Puma. This may trigger the instinct to chase.
- Never bend down or crouch near a Puma. This emulates a four legged prey and exposes your back and neck to a Puma.
- If you encounter a Puma, become the aggressor. Make eye contact, appear large, throw stones, pick up large branches, use garden tools, spread your jacket above your head, speak loudly and firmly, and do not turn your back.
- Pick children up without bending over if possible.
- Keep your family/group together. A large group of people appears much more aggressive than individuals to the Puma.

It is important to remember that the Puma plays an important role in our ecosystem. As a top predator, the Puma maintains a check on its main food source, the white-tailed deer. Again, your chances of encountering a Puma are extremely remote.

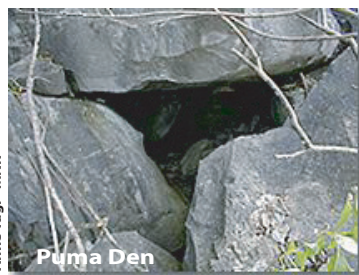
For more information, please contact:



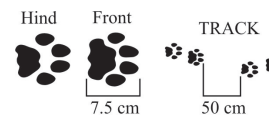
Upper Thames River Conservation Authority
519-451-2800
infoline@thamesriver.on.ca
www.thamesriver.on.ca

or

Ontario Puma Foundation
Stuart Kenn, President
Provincial Research Coordinator
E-mail: skenn@ontariopuma.ca
Telephone: 905-729-4273
Box 580, Beeton, Ontario, L0G 1A0



Anne Yeagi - MNR



Special thanks to

The Ontario Puma Foundation
for graciously providing the information for this brochure.

