



You Are In Cougar Country!

Cougars are large, seldom seen inhabitants of the Olympic wilderness. Like any wild animals they are potentially dangerous, though far more outdoor injuries are caused by lightning or bee sting. Attacks on humans are rare, but close encounters between humans and cougars have increased in recent years. To most visitors, glimpsing a cougar in the wild is thrilling. Although few people will ever see a cougar, the following suggestions can help ensure a safe experience should you encounter one.

Preventing An Encounter

- ◆ Don't hike alone
- ◆ Keep children within sight
- ◆ Avoid dead animals
- ◆ Keep a clean camp
- ◆ Leave pets at home
- ◆ Be alert to your surroundings

If You Meet A Cougar

- ◆ Don't run!
- ◆ Stand and face it
- ◆ Pick up children
- ◆ Appear large, wave arms or jacket over your head
- ◆ Do not approach, back away slowly

If Cougar Becomes Aggressive

- ◆ Don't turn your back or take your eyes off it
- ◆ Throw things
- ◆ Shout loudly
- ◆ Fight back aggressively

Please report all cougar sightings to the nearest ranger station or park headquarters, 600 East Park Ave., Port Angeles, WA 98362, (360) 452-4501, or dial 911 in an emergency.

Identifying a Cougar

The cougar, also called mountain lion, puma, or panther, once ranged across North America and from Canada to the tip of South America. Its scientific name, *Felis concolor*, means "cat of one color," which is usually tawny gray or reddish-brown with black markings on the face, ears and tip of the tail. Young kittens have black spots. Adult males can be over eight feet long (including nearly **three feet of tail!**) and can weigh over 150 pounds; females weigh about 90 to 110 pounds. An adult cougar's front paw track is about 3½ inches across, with rear paw tracks slightly smaller.



Life-sized cougar front paw track

Natural History

Cougars usually hunt at night for their primary prey—deer or elk. They typically cover the carcass with leaves or branches and may return to feed on it for several days. Though they are most active at dusk and dawn, they can be seen at any time of the day. Cougars are solitary except during mating. Cubs and mothers can stay together for two years. In the wild their life span is about 12 years.

Reporting Sightings

If you see a cougar, please report your observations to the nearest ranger station, park headquarters (600 E. Park Ave., Port Angeles, WA 98362, 360-452-4501), or call 911 if it's an emergency. A description of the animal, the location, date and time of day, the cat's behavior and distance, duration of the encounter, and your name and telephone number can help park managers protect visitors and cougars.

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