

THE MAGNIFICENT MOUNTAIN LION

“Cougar,” another term for mountain lion, is a popular name for athletic teams. It brings to mind the image of an animal of exceptional beauty, grace, and power. Although mountain lions are admired for these and other traits, they are also feared, like wolves and grizzly bears, as large and potentially dangerous predators. Mountain lions once roamed in every state, but today they can only be found in twelve western states and Florida.

Mountain lions normally avoid people, but as California’s population grows, people and lions are increasingly sharing the same spaces. The challenge ahead is finding ways for both people and mountain lions to coexist in harmony and safety.

IF YOU ENCOUNTER A MOUNTAIN LION

- ▶ Don’t approach the lion, and don’t run or turn your back to it.
- ▶ Pick up small children, but avoid bending over as much as possible.
- ▶ Appear as large as possible by raising your arms and spreading your jacket.
- ▶ Wave your arms and speak loudly.
- ▶ Throw whatever you can reach without bending over.
- ▶ Back away slowly and give the lion an escape route.
- ▶ Fight back if attacked.

TO AVOID ENCOUNTERING A MOUNTAIN LION:

Don’t hike alone, and make noise to avoid surprising a lion.

Avoid hiking at dawn or dusk when lions usually hunt.

Keep children near you and pets secured.

