

# Cougar Smart New Mexico

*Common Sense Tips  
when in Cougar Country*



## DON'T RUN

- If you see a cougar, face the cougar and slowly back away
- DO NOT run or play dead
- Pick up small children immediately and calm them
- Leave room for the cougar to escape, do not approach
- Make noise, make yourself look larger, lift arms up, and shout loudly
- If the cougar attacks, fight back hard with sticks, stones, backpack



## BE ALERT

- Do not approach dead animals – cougars defend their prey
- Hike in groups and make enough noise to prevent surprising a cougar
- Carry a walking stick and bear pepper spray
- Keep pets leashed



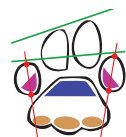
## PARENTS

- Keep children close at hand
- Don't let children run ahead or fall behind

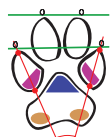
*Cougars can be dangerous; being smart, cautious,  
and aware may prevent incidents or attacks*

Anyone who sees a cougar that may be a threat to public safety is urged to call Game & Fish dispatch at (505) 827-9376 at any time.  
In case of emergency, call 911.

COUGAR



DOG



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## Here are some ways to protect yourself, your family, and wildlife from unwanted encounters with cougars and other large predators:

**Closely supervise children.** Make sure they are home before dusk and not outside before dawn. Make lots of noise if you come or go during times when mountain lions are most active—dusk to dawn. Teach your children about cougars and what they should do if they encounter one.

**Do not feed wildlife or attract deer or other prey species to your home.** Cougars follow their prey. To avoid attracting prey species into your yard, use native plants in landscaping, not nonnatives. Deer-proof fences 6 to 8 feet high will deter deer and cougars.

**Do not let your pets roam around outside.** Bring them in at night. If you keep pets outside, provide a kennel with a secure top. Do not feed pets outside where the food can attract cougars

or other smaller animals, which cougars prey upon. Store and dispose of all garbage securely.

**Eliminate hiding places and build barriers.** Landscape or remove vegetation to eliminate hiding cover for cougars, especially around areas where children play. Fence children's play areas. Make it difficult for a cougar to approach unseen. Close off open spaces below porches or decks.

**Install outdoor lighting,** especially in areas where you walk, so you can see a cougar if one were present.

**Place all livestock in enclosed sheds or barns at night.** Close the doors to all outbuildings so that an inquisitive cougar is prevented from going inside to look around.

## Cougar Natural History

Cougars (*Puma concolor*), also called mountain lions or pumas, are second to jaguars as the largest cat in the Americas. Adults' body lengths are 6 to 8 feet, from nose to tail, which can be 3 feet, or 1 meter long. Males weigh 120 to 180 pounds, and females weigh 80 to 110 pounds.

Cougars have a uniformly gray to reddish-tan body color. The muzzle and chest are white, and there are black markings on the face, ears, and tip of the tail. Cougar kittens are mottled with black spots and have ringed tails until they are about 6 months old.

Cougars are carnivores. Although their usual prey is deer and other wildlife, it is possible, although rare, for them to perceive humans as prey.

**Habitat:** Cougars normally are reclusive animals that avoid humans. They make their dens in rocky outcroppings, dense thickets, and under uprooted trees. They are highly territorial—a male cougar may dominate a range of up to 100 square miles.



## Ecosystem Vitality

Large carnivores contribute to the richness and complexity of animal and plant life in ecosystems. Having cougars on the landscape helps to regulate all of these populations. In the absence of cougars and other predators, deer, rodents, and other prey populations' numbers greatly increase, causing problems for humans and the environment.