

FACT SHEET

Information about the Wildlife Health Center's research report (1/04)
on the interactions of mountain lions and people in Southern California.

How did scientists study mountain lions in this region?

Though Cuyamaca Rancho State Park has been known to be home to mountain lions, few visitors ever get the chance to see them. Scientists placed collars, with radiotransmitters, on 20 lions in the park area. Throughout the study, using GPS technology, the scientists "followed" these lions movement throughout the days and months. This report compares the "paths" of 20 collared lions with locations of trails and roads used by park visitors to see if lion and people use the park area in different ways.

Why Cuyamaca Rancho State Park?

In 1994, a woman hiking in this park was attacked and killed by a mountain lion. As a result, management agencies and the local community are interested in using science to better understand how mountain lions and people affect each other. The park receives about half a million visitors annually. Bordering one of the most populated regions in the country, CRSP is one of the best places to understand how mountain lions live and act when people have moved into their habitat.

What did the study find out?

- Mountain lions are active when we are not. Lions moved around the most during the night, dusk and dawn. Dawn and dusk are the times when people have a higher chance of running into a mountain lion.
- "Cache sites," places where lions hide their killed prey, were found most often near roads and trails—areas people used frequently during the day.
- Deer were the lions' most common prey, but 7/17 lions ate domestic animals (pets, livestock) at some point during the study
- Survival for mountain lions in this region was quite low (11 of the 20 died)
 - 4 killed on depredation permits
 - 4 died for unknown causes
 - 1 hit by car
 - 1 killed by another mountain lion
 - 1 burned to death in the Cedar Fire

What did the report recommend to management agencies?

- Community education programs about living in mountain lion habitat
- Use the data from this report in the planning of new campsites, to avoid potential lion encounters with visitors.
- Move any cache site found near trails to an area with less public use
- Continue research on the interactions of people and mountain lions in this region, especially now that the Cedar Fire has dramatically changed the landscape.

How do I find out more?

Visit the Wildlife Health Center's Southern California Program Website:
<http://www.vetmed.ucdavis.edu/whc/scehp>