

Safety in Cougar Country

Recent cougar (mountain lion) sightings have been reported in the Dehcho, South and North Slave Regions. Attacks by the usually shy cougar are extremely rare but tragic incidents in nearby jurisdictions show they do occur. The following guidelines will help ensure your safety in the ever-expanding cougar country.

To Prevent Conflicts with Cougars:

- Do not feed wildlife such as foxes or coyotes. Feeding wildlife encourages them to remain in areas of human use, often in greater-than-normal densities. This, in turn, attracts cougars and increases the potential for conflict with people.
- Do not leave pet food where other wildlife or a cougar can get access to it.
- Do not allow pets to run at large. Cougars will prey on dogs and cats and quickly learn they are easy to take. If pets are left outside, they should be in covered cages. A cougar can leap over an eight-foot fence to get a pet.
- Do not leave doors of barns, garages or sheds open. Inquisitive cougars may go inside for a look.
- Do not allow children to play alone in foothill locations, particularly at dawn and dusk when cougars are most active. Brush should be cleared away from bus stops and other places where cougars can hide.

If You Encounter a Cougar:

- Do not panic. Most cougars will try to avoid confrontation.
- Raise your arms to make yourself appear as large as possible. Cougars prefer smaller prey.
- Slowly back away, being careful never to run and/or turn your back. Yell at the cougar and wave your arms as you back away.
- Do not make direct eye contact. Cougars perceive this as an act of aggression.
- If you are attacked, fight back, doing your best not to allow the cougar to get behind you.

If you observe unusual or threatening behavior by a cougar, please notify your nearest Environment and Natural Resources Office.