

Cougar (*Puma concolor*)



Taxonomy:

Family Felidae. Also known as mountain lion, puma, or panther. Sixteen subspecies occur in North America, including *Puma concolor hippolestes* which occurs in the Wasatch region

Description:

Distinguished from other carnivores by the large size, long tail, and uniform gray to dark brown color.

Total length: 1.5-2.7 m; Tail: 534-784; Weight: 36-103 kg.



Distribution:

Currently occurs from southeastern Alaska, British Columbia, and Alberta south through the western US and Mexico into Central and South America. Formerly occurring throughout the east and mid-western US, but extirpated except for a remnant population in Florida. Recently documented in the Appalachian and Adirondack regions and the upper Midwest. Common in the mountains of the Wasatch Front.

Ecology and diet:

Cougars occur in a wide range of regional habitats, from low elevation desert shrub communities to alpine habitats. They are

principal predators of mule deer, but they also prey on a variety of small to large mammals including domestic livestock. Cougars are solitary and primarily nocturnal. They generally avoid contact with humans, but on rare occasions do attack people.

Life History:

Cougars may breed throughout the year. Females bear 1-6 cubs after a 3 month gestation. Young remain with the mother for up to 2 years, which represents the normal birth interval for females. Animals may breed in their 3rd. year. In the wild, cougars can live as long as 12 years.

References: Currier 1983; Hall 1981; Zeweloff 1988.