



Oregon Sea Grant Extension
Sustainable Tourism &
Outdoor Recreation Program

Interpretative Fact Sheet Cougar (*Felix concolor*)



The following short article is from the [Oregon Coast 101 Species](#) collection used by the Guide and Outfitter Recognized Professional (GORP) training program. These articles are intended to provide interesting facts you can share with your clientele and add value to your services.

An Interpretive Fact Sheet has been written about each species. We are currently uploading these blogs and creating the links.

Come visit us!

**Tourism and Business Development College of Business,
Oregon State University Extension - Oregon Sea Grant at**

<http://tourism.oregonstate.edu/>

Guide and Outfitter Recognized Professional Program

<https://www.GORPguide.org>

For more information about the GORP training program see:

<https://www.gorpguide.org/become-a-gorp-certified-guide>

Cougar (*Puma concolor*)

 tourism.oregonstate.edu/cougar-puma-concolor/

By colliiek2

September 8, 2020

*It was a bright sunny morning. Beautiful blue skies.
Leaf rake in hand. The dog lagged behind, sniffing as usual.*

*The garden was just ahead, not more than 10 feet away.
A scuffle. A deep growl. My legs stopped moving.
The dog laser-focused on something angry nearby.*

*The palette crashed spilling nursery pots across the path.
The cat scream split the morning calm like an untimely tear of a dress seam.
The dog leaped, feet running before touching ground, barking fearlessly.*

*The cougar looked nearly as big as the 100-plus pound dog.
The giant cat didn't know the dog also liked to climb trees
and that chasing lions was her birthright.*

Not all wildlife is friendly.

Living in a rural area, we are often surprised by the variety of wildlife all around us. Some of it is not very friendly.

Oregon is home to more than 6,000 cougars, also called mountain lions. Quite a change from the estimated 200 cougars counted in the 1960s.

Oregon has three cat species, all belonging to the same family as the domestic house cat. Cougars however are considerably larger than a house cat. Size will vary depending on location and prey population. Males can top 200 lbs. with females being somewhat smaller and lighter.



Courtesy ODFW

Territory pressures

Chance interactions with humans increase as cougar populations grow and humans encroach on territories. In recent years, more cougars are being seen in the wrong places, like suburbs.

Interactions occur not just from population increases. Territorial pressure, particularly with males also increase. Males are very territorial and will push out or kill young male cougars to retain it. Males can have a huge range of up to 500 square miles; females less.

Normally cougars are very solitary. On occasion will work as part of a pack (females raising young will congregate). Cougars have the largest range of any wild land animal in the Americas. They can be found on the western half of North America including southern Canada, through South America. Some are found on the U.S. East coast.

Prey.

Like other cats, cougars are graceful and muscular hunters. Great leaping and short sprint abilities make it possible for them to take many types of prey. Cougars will sprint between 40-50 mph, and typically avoid long chases. Common prey includes: deer, rodents, porcupines, beavers, raccoons, rabbits, wild turkey, small insects, and baby bears.

They have large front feet with five retractable claws to hold prey. Back feet are smaller with only four retractable claws. Foot prints will look similar to a large dog minus the claws.

No species prey on cougars except humans.

Silent hunters.

Cougars are not considered a “big cat” like a lion or tiger—they lack the physical ability to roar. Cougars will hiss, growl, purr like a domestic cat, and are well known for their scream. To safely hear cougar screams browse YouTube.

Check out these great references from the Oregon Dept. of Fish and Wild life to learn more:

—*Living with Wildlife*, Cougar

(https://www.dfw.state.or.us/wildlife/living_with/cougars.asp) which provides information on tracking, precautions, and safety.

Wildlife Viewing (<https://myodfw.com/wildlife-viewing/species/cats>) and hunting (<https://myodfw.com/big-game-hunting/species/cougar>).

—*Cougar Country* brochure

(https://www.dfw.state.or.us/wildlife/living_with/docs/CougarBroch.pdf).

Other references include:

—Wikipedia (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cougar>) which has an excellent detailed description on cougar characteristics, behavior, range, and more.

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—True cougar story above based on author’s experience... Yikes!