

City of Vacaville

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MOUNTIAN LION SIGHTINGS REPORTED NEAR BUTCHER ROAD

Residents are once again being advised to be aware of the potential to encounter wildlife, including mountain lions, where using trails in various parks in more rural areas of Vacaville and its outskirts.

Residents using the trails near Lagoon Valley recently reported seeing a mountain lion, as well as other hikers near Cherry Glen Road. The City has posted temporary signs at trail heads advising hikers what to do should they encounter a mountain lion. Here are a few suggestions from the Mountain Lion Foundation on what to do should you meet up with a lion:

- **Make yourself appear as large as possible** - Make yourself appear larger by picking up your children, leashing pets in, and standing close to other adults. Open your jacket. Raise your arms. Wave your raised arms slowly.
- **Make noise** - Yell, shout, bang your walking stick against a tree. Make any loud sound that cannot be confused by the lion as the sound of prey. Speak slowly, firmly and loudly to disrupt and discourage predatory behavior.
- **Act like a predator yourself** - Maintain eye contact. Never run past or from a mountain lion. Never bend over or crouch down. Aggressively wave your raised arms, throw stones or branches, all without turning away.
- **Slowly create distance** - Assess the situation. Consider whether you may be between the lion and its kittens, or between the lion and its prey or cache. Back slowly to a spot that gives the mountain lion a path to get away, never turning away from the animal. Give a mountain lion the time and ability to move away.

(More)

- **Protect yourself** - If attacked, fight back. Protect your neck and throat. People have utilized rocks, jackets, garden tools, tree branches, walking sticks, fanny packs and even bare hands to turn away cougars.

If you do see a mountain lion, no matter how thrilled you are to be one of the very few who gets such an opportunity, stay well back, and take the encounter seriously.

According to a report issued by the Department of Fish and Game: “DFG does not consider mountain lion sightings near human habitation a public safety concern **as long as the lion is not exhibiting aggressive behavior towards people** (emphasis added). Mountain lions occur most anywhere you can find their primary prey, which is deer. As you likely know, deer not only live in remote forests, but also in green belts, parkways and riparian corridors along rivers. As such, mountain lion sightings in these areas are not uncommon, and DFG receives numerous reports of lions in these settings every month. Mountain lions are considered beneficial in these settings as they maintain healthy deer herds by keeping their populations in check.

DFG has scientific evidence that mountain lions inhabiting areas close to humans are no real cause for concern. We have either conducted or been associated with mountain lion studies that have monitored their movements in such areas. We typically capture mountain lions and place a radio collar on them in order to track their movements. The information gleaned from these collars has provided some illuminating results. They have indicated that mountain lions regularly use such areas more frequently than we have previously thought, and that these lions generally attempt to stay away from people.”

Please exercise caution when using the various trails, parks and other rural areas of Vacaville.

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