



# COUGAR HUNTING IN ALBERTA

1. Cougar populations in Alberta are managed with public hunting seasons to help maintain healthy populations, reduce conflicts with people, manage predation on wild ungulates, and to provide recreational opportunities.
2. Cougars are extremely difficult to survey and as a result, Alberta does not have an updated population estimate. However, radio telemetry studies indicate that cougar numbers have increased 3-fold in west-central Alberta in the past 20 years, and sightings and mortalities indicate that cougars have expanded northward and eastward. Overall, cougars are doing very well in Alberta and appear to be increasing in numbers and expanding in distribution.
3. Cougars are extremely capable of living in relatively close proximity to people as long as they have adequate hiding cover and abundant prey. The abundance of deer in Alberta means that we will likely continue to see cougars expanding their range.
4. Cougars do occasionally kill livestock (typically sheep) but problems are infrequent compared to most other predator species. Recent research has provided important information about the density of the cougar population and is helping the ministry update its management plan for cougars.
5. **What's new in 2011?**
  - The cost of a resident cougar licence has been reduced to \$20.31
  - Cougar Management Area (CMA) boundaries have changed in some areas, and CMAs have been re-numbered.
  - Six Wildlife Management Units (WMUs) have been added to CMAs, and one WMU has been removed.
  - A new fall season has been added in some areas. The use of dogs is prohibited during this season.
  - Hunters and landowners are now required to submit a pre-molar tooth from harvested cougars for aging purposes.
  - Owners and occupants of private land are now able to keep cougars that they hunt on their own land.

6. **Licences:**

<u>Licence Type</u>	<u>Valid From</u>	<u>Fees</u>
Resident cougar licence	November 1 to February 28	\$20.31
Non-resident cougar licence	December 1 to February 28	\$135.31
Cougar special licence*	December 1 to February 28	\$254.97

\*Available only to non-resident and non-resident aliens and must be purchased through an outfitter guide.

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7. **Bag Limit:**  
One cougar of either sex. Cougars killed as authorized by owners and occupants of private land do not count towards the bag limit.
- It is unlawful to hunt a female cougar accompanied by a cougar kitten with spotted fur, or a cougar kitten with spotted fur. Before shooting, hunters should carefully evaluate whether a cougar has spots, or whether it is accompanied by another cougar that has spots.*
8. During the winter season, the season for either male or female cougars may be closed while the season for the other sex remains open. In these cases, hunters must be able to identify the sex of a cougar prior to harvest. Adult male cougars have a conspicuous black spot approximately 4-5 inches (10-14 cm) below the anus. Female cougars have a much less conspicuous black spot approximately 1 inch (2-3 cm) below the anus. The black spot on the female cougars is often hidden by the base of the tail. Hunters are encouraged to use binoculars to look for the location of the black spot.
9. **Tooth Collection:**  
During registration, Fish and Wildlife staff will remove a premolar tooth for aging. This allows the Department to determine the age structure of the cougar harvest, which is used in setting quotas. If possible, cougars should be brought in for registration in an unfrozen condition so the tooth can be removed. It is also helpful to prop the jaw open with a stick before rigor sets in. The registration will not be considered complete until the tooth has been collected. Ages of cougars will be available at [www.mywildalberta.ca](http://www.mywildalberta.ca), listed by registration number, within 18 months of the date of registration.
10. **Harvest:**  
The provincial cougar harvest has averaged approximately 110 animals/year over the past few years. Alberta has developed a reputation as a top destination for trophy sized cougars.
11. For further information on the studies conducted in Alberta visit these websites:
- **The Prairie Cougar: Examining the Effects of a Re-established Predator Population.**  
<http://www.wildcatconservation.org/Prairie-Cougar-In-Alberta.html>
  - **Clearcuts and Cougar Predation in West-Central Alberta**  
<http://www.ualberta.ca/~kknopff/cougars/documents/kyleposter2.pdf>

## KEY CONTACTS

**Alberta Sustainable Resource  
Development  
Fish and Wildlife Division**

**Living with Cougars Brochure**

**Cougar Management Plan**

**Phone: 310.0000** and ask for the nearest  
Fish and Wildlife office.

**Web-site:** [www.mywildalberta.com](http://www.mywildalberta.com)

**Web-site:** [http://www.srd.alberta.ca/  
BioDiversityStewardship/WildSpecies/  
Mammals/WildCats/Cougar.aspx](http://www.srd.alberta.ca/BioDiversityStewardship/WildSpecies/Mammals/WildCats/Cougar.aspx)

**Web-site:** [http://www.srd.alberta.ca/  
ManagingPrograms/FishWildlifeManagement/  
documents/MgmtPlanCougars.pdf](http://www.srd.alberta.ca/ManagingPrograms/FishWildlifeManagement/documents/MgmtPlanCougars.pdf)

### HUNTING FOR TOMORROW

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