

1/28/2010 Fort Lewis College Durango, CO

Last evening, students have reported seeing a mountain lion behind Snyder A. The Colorado Division of Wildlife suggest you do the following:

## If You Encounter a Mountain Lion

---

People rarely get more than a brief glimpse of a mountain lion in the wild. Lion attacks on people are rare, with fewer than a dozen fatalities in North America in more than 100 years. Most of the attacks were by young lions, perhaps forced out to hunt on their own and not yet living in established areas. Young lions may key in on easy prey, like pets and small children.

No studies have been done to determine what to do if you meet a lion. But based on observations by people who have come upon lions, some patterns of behavior and response are beginning to emerge. With this in mind, the following suggestions may be helpful. Remember: Every situation is different with respect to the lion, the terrain, the people, and their activity.



**Photo above:** A bobcat. Similar in some ways to a mountain lion, but what is the most obvious difference? (Photo courtesy of the USFWS.)

If you have small children with you, protect them by picking them up so they won't panic and run.

- If the lion behaves aggressively, throw stones, branches or whatever you can get your hands on without crouching down or turning your back. Wave your arms slowly and speak firmly. What you want to do is convince the lion you are not prey and that you may in fact be a danger to the lion.
- **Fight back** if a lion attacks you. Lions have been driven away by prey that fights back. People have fought back with rocks, sticks, caps or jackets, garden tools and their bare hands successfully. Remain standing or try to get back up!

- When you walk or hike in mountain lion country, go in groups and make plenty of noise to reduce your chances of surprising a lion. A sturdy walking stick is a good idea; it can be used to ward off a lion. Make sure children are close to you and within your sight at all times. Talk with children about lions and teach them what to do if they meet one.

- Do not approach a lion, especially one that is feeding or with kittens. Most mountain lions will try to avoid a confrontation. Give them a way to escape.

- **Stay calm** when you come upon a lion. Talk calmly yet firmly to it. Move slowly.

- **Stop or back away slowly**, if you can do it safely. Running may stimulate a lion's instinct to chase and attack. Face the lion and stand upright.

- **Do all you can to appear larger.** Raise your arms. Open your jacket if you're wearing one.