

## Neighborhood Wildlife Stewards

*Teaching our Highlands neighbors how to live safely with wildlife and keeping the wildlife wild.*

### **Cougars and Bobcats**

Both cougars and bobcats live in the surrounding woods of Issaquah Highlands and because of their elusive nature and wariness around people they are seldom seen. Often people confuse the identity of cougars and bobcats with one another, but they are different in several ways.

#### **Cougar (Felis concolor - cat of one color)**

Reddish brown, tawny or gray  
100-140 lbs  
8 feet in length (head to tail)  
3 foot tail with black tip  
Rounded ears

#### **Bobcat (Felis rufus - cat of red color)**

Light brown to reddish brown with some spots  
20-30 lbs  
3 feet in length  
3-6 inch tail with black tip  
Slightly pointed ears with tufts at end

### **Cougar**

Cougars also known as pumas or mountain lions are solitary and secretive animals. They are the largest members of the cat family in North America and according to the Washington Dept. of Fish and Wildlife their numbers are declining (in 2002 the population was estimated to be between 2,400 and 3,500). Cougars use rock outcroppings or dense brush and forests to remain hidden while hunting: they may stalk prey for up to an hour or more. Most active from dusk until dawn cougar's prey upon deer, elk, mountain goats, raccoons, coyotes, rabbits and occasionally pets and livestock. It is true that there have been reports of cougars attacking people but there have been fewer than 20 fatalities in all of North America in the last 100 years. Cougars usually mate in winter and early spring with the female giving birth after 91 days to one to four kittens. The average life span of a cougar is 10-12 years and the main cause of death is hunting by humans and collisions with vehicles.



### **Encountering a Cougar**

- Stop, stand tall and do not run. Remember a cougar's instinct is to chase its prey.
- Pick up small children.
- Do not turn your back to a cougar and never take your eyes off the cougar.
- Try to appear larger than the cougar by opening your coat or standing on a rock.
- If the cougar does not flee, then shout, wave your arms and throw something at the cougar so you appear to be a threat.
- If the cougar attacks, fight back aggressively and stay on your feet.

### **Bobcat**

The bobcat population in Washington State is unknown, but they are similar to cougars in several ways. Bobcats also use rock cliffs and ledges for shelter, and they are mostly active at night. Food sources usually include small mammals from mice, rabbits to deer fawns: bobcats

may occasionally prey on domestic cats. Like cougars, bobcats are solitary and only associate for a brief time for mating with a litter of 3 kittens being born between April and July. Bobcats can live for 12 years but on average only live for 3-4 years and are preyed upon by cougars, coyotes and humans.

### **Coexisting with Cougars and Bobcats**

- Don't feed wildlife. This includes feral cats and raccoons. Predators follow prey.
- Feed cats and dogs indoors.
- Keep cats and dogs indoors, especially from dusk until dawn.
- Keep garbage stored inside a garage or in an approved ARC enclosure. Garbage attracts small mammals that in turn attract cougars and bobcats, as well as bears.



**Bobcat**  
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If you care about the welfare of the wildlife in our area, want to learn more about living safely with the wildlife, and would enjoy meeting your neighbors, join us for our monthly meetings.

September's topic: Coexisting with Black Bears presentation by Julie Hopkins, Wildlife Biologist

Time and place: 7:00 p.m. on September 8th at Blakely Hall

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