

**MOUNTAIN LION MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES  
FOR  
LION DAU L-12  
GAME MANAGEMENT UNITS  
29, 38, 39, 391, 46, 461, 51, & 104**

Prepared for:  
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Northeast Region

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**DESCRIPTION OF MANAGEMENT AREA AND HABITAT**

DAU L-12 is located in north central Colorado. It surrounds the Denver-Boulder metropolitan area and contains the urban interface areas west and south of the metro area. It is bounded on the west by the Continental Divide, on the north by Lefthand Canyon and the Brainard Lake Road, on the east by the Great Plains and the south by the Douglas-El Paso County line and the South Platte River.

This lion DAU is very diverse in many respects. Elevation ranges from approximately 5,200 feet in the east to over 14,000 feet on the west. Vegetation includes short grass prairie, Gambel's oak, montane and subalpine forests, and alpine tundra. The DAU contains Colorado's largest urban center and it also contains 2 wilderness areas.

No estimate or studies of the lion population have been done in this DAU. It is believed that lion numbers have been stable over the last 10 years. There is adequate prey including deer, elk, and other mammals to support a healthy lion population.

**TOTAL LION HARVEST OBJECTIVE:** The harvest has ranged from 3 to 15 over the last 10 years with an average of 9. The current quota is 61. The quota is seldom met in any of the GMUs due to the suburban land ownership patterns. This makes hunting lions with hounds difficult in most areas that lions occupy during the winter hunting season. Since quotas are seldom met, there is no reason to increase them. The lion population appears healthy so there is no reason to decrease quotas. The current quota allows for unlimited lion hunting opportunity. The quota for 2000 is 61.

**LION DAMAGE OBJECTIVE:** Game damage payments have averaged \$1,455 per year during the last 3 years. Damage has been as high as \$11,621 in 1990-91. Damage has been paid for a variety of livestock and pets. The damage objective should be \$1,500. If this objective is exceeded, actions should be taken to reduce damage payments. Actions could include; increase education on methods people can take to protect their livestock and pets, and target individual lions causing damage for removal by trap and transplant or by lethal

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means.

Increasing hunter harvest would not be effective. Quotas are not met currently, so in effect, lion hunting is unlimited in this DAU. During the winter lion hunting season, the highest density of deer, and presumably lions, are on Open Space and private land and not available to hunters.

**LION-HUMAN CONFLICTS:** DAU L-12 has had the highest number of reported lion-human conflicts in Colorado for the last 2 years. There were 30 reported in 1998 and 14 in 1997. This is not surprising because this DAU has the greatest number of people of any DAU in the state. The goal should be to keep lion-human conflicts to fewer than 25 per year. Continuing education efforts and targeting individual lions that are causing conflicts will achieve this.

**LION IMPACTS ON OTHER WILDLIFE:** Lions have few, if any, negative impacts on other wildlife species in this DAU. Deer populations are at, or slightly above, objectives in 2 of the 3 deer DAUs and observed fawn:doe ratios have exceeded 60:100 in recent years. Although deer numbers are below objective in D-17, the deer population has been increasing in recent years. The highest deer densities, and presumably, lion densities, are found in the first few hogbacks west of the plains and urban areas. Very few hunting opportunities for any species occur in this area due to large holdings of open space in Boulder and Jefferson counties and the suburban pattern of the private land.

Lion predation on elk is desirable in this DAU because elk populations have been increasing and are at or above objective. There is evidence of lion predation on bighorn sheep, especially ewes and lambs, in unit S32. This is also acceptable because the bighorn population has been increasing and is slightly above objective. It has been challenging to remove adequate numbers of ewes due to low success rates for ewe hunters and the declining availability of acceptable transplant sites. History has proven many times, that overpopulation of bighorn leads to large-scale die-offs. There is evidence that lions also prey on raccoons. There is no concern for declining raccoon populations and they often are considered nuisance species by landowners.