

**MOUNTAIN LION MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES
FOR
LION DAU L-9
GAME MANAGEMENT UNITS
41, 411, 42, 421, 52, 521, 53, 63, & 64**

Prepared for:
Colorado Division of Wildlife
West Region

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DESCRIPTION OF MANAGEMENT AREA AND HABITAT

DAU L-9 is located in the Grand Mesa and North Fork of the Gunnison River areas of west central Colorado. It is bounded on the north by the Colorado River; on the east by the Divide Creek and Crystal River divide, the Muddy Creek and Crystal River-divide, the North Fork of the Gunnison and the Gunnison River divide and Curecanti Creek; and on the south and west by Colorado Highway 50. Pinyon-juniper woodlands and sagebrush are the dominant vegetation types at lower elevations in the DAU. Oakbrush, serviceberry, and aspen woodlands dominate mid-elevations. Spruce/fir forests are found at the higher elevations. The entire DAU is considered to be yearlong mountain lion range.

TOTAL MOUNTAIN LION HARVEST OBJECTIVE: The mountain lion sport harvest in the DAU has steadily increased during the past 11 years (1988-1998). The harvests from 1988 to 1992 ranged from 0 to 7 annually, whereas, the harvests from 1993 through 1998 have ranged from 18 to 36 (1997). There have been 6 reported damage harvests in the DAU during the past 11 years.

The harvest quota was 36 in 1996 and 1997 and the quota was filled in 1997. The quota was increased to 44 in 1998 and 25 lions were harvested. The quota was increased again in 1999 to 49, and to 51 in 2000.

The current quota seems to be meeting the sportsmen's demands without any adverse impacts to the mountain lion population. Therefore, the annual quota should be maintained at 51. The Division of Wildlife will rely on sport hunting as the primary method to control mountain lion populations in the DAU.

MOUNTAIN LION DAMAGE OBJECTIVE: Mountain lion damage claims over the past 11 fiscal years (1987-88 to 1998-99) have averaged \$2,169 per year. The highest claims totaling \$8,184 occurred in 1995-1996. The claims in other years have been low to well below average. Damage claims should be held below \$3,000 annually with the most effective control being the harvest of individual offending animals.

HUMAN / MOUNTAIN LION CONFLICT COMPLAINTS: Human-lion conflicts in the DAU have remained low.

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Lions that exhibit aggressive behavior or show lack of fear for humans should immediately be removed from the population.

MOUNTAIN LION / UNGULATE INTERACTION: It is well established that mountain lions prey on mule deer and elk. Studies currently underway in several areas of Colorado indicate that mountain lion predation is not a significant factor in regulating deer or elk populations. Elk populations are generally above objective in the DAU. No specific control measures other than sport hunting and the take of individual animals causing damage or posing a threat to human safety will be used to control mountain lions in this DAU.

December 4, 2000