

**MOUNTAIN LION MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES
FOR
LION DAU L-15
GAME MANAGEMENT UNITS
57, 58, & 581**

Prepared for:
Colorado Division of Wildlife
Southeast Region

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INTRODUCTION

The goal of the Division of Wildlife is to maintain a healthy, self-sustaining mountain lion population that is in balance with its habitat with a minimum of game damage and nuisance complaints. This management plan establishes guidelines for lion management in the central Arkansas River Valley. Lion hunting and harvest will be adjusted as necessary to achieve the unit objective.

DESCRIPTION OF MANAGEMENT AREA AND HABITAT

This management unit is located on the north side of the Arkansas River, from Salida downstream to Colorado Highway 67 approximately 4 miles east of Canon City. It includes game management units 57, 58, and 581. Altitude ranges from 5,400' to 7,000'. Approximately 41% of the 1,833 square miles in this unit are public lands.

Habitat quality ranges from poor to excellent, largely depending on altitude, aspect, the resulting vegetative stands and the prey populations they support. Habitat types include riparian, pinion-juniper woodland, semi-desert shrubland, grassland, montane shrubland, mountain meadow, montane forest, subalpine forest, and alpine tundra. Except for the portion of the unit in the open part of South Park, this area is good to excellent lion habitat supporting a good population of lions.

Land use in this unit is primarily agricultural or recreational/forest use. Agricultural use is primarily livestock grazing with a small amount of grass and alfalfa hay production. Recently a large amount of private land has been converted to seasonal or year-round residential land use. Much of this conversion has occurred at lower elevations impacting the better quality habitat for lions and prey species. Recreational activities, which primarily occur on public land, include camping, hiking, hunting, fishing, and off-road vehicle use.

SPORT HARVEST OBJECTIVE: The annual sport harvest should not exceed 25-30 lions on a 3-year floating average. Harvest over the last 10 years has averaged 20 per year ranging from 11 to 28. The 3-year floating

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average has ranged from 14.0 to 27.7 over the same time period. The current population is believed to be stable to increasing and can support a larger harvest on a sustained basis. The current annual quota is 34 for this DAU. This quota has not been reached and currently allows unlimited lion hunting opportunity.

PRESCRIPTIONS: If sport harvest exceeds the 3-year floating average, the annual quota will be reduced. We will also attempt to redirect hunting pressure by informing the public of other areas where an increase in harvest is desired.

DAMAGE OBJECTIVE: Damage caused by mountain lions should not exceed \$1,000 per year on a 3-year floating average. There have only been two years with damage payments over the last ten years (\$747 and \$2,127). The three-year floating average has ranged from \$0 to \$958. Non-sport harvest has removed 5 lions in the last 10 years.

PRESCRIPTIONS: If damage caused by lions exceeds the objective, we will focus management activities on the individual lions causing damage. Whenever possible, licensed hunters will be used to remove lions causing damage. Wildlife Services will be requested to remove lions involved in significant livestock depredations.

HUMAN/LION CONFLICT OBJECTIVE: Lion conflict reports should not exceed 5 per year. During the last two years there have been no reports submitted.

PRESCRIPTIONS: If conflict reports exceed the annual objective, information will be provided to the public, livestock owners, land use agencies and law enforcement agencies on how to reduce or eliminate conflicts. Site inspections will be conducted and reporting parties will be advised on how to avoid lion conflicts.