

# The CRF Update

Newsletter of the Cougar Rewilding Foundation  
Formerly the Eastern Cougar Foundation



*Bringing Back a Legend*

November 15, 2010

2010: Number 2



***Cougar captured by a remote camera in Greene County, Indiana on May 1, 2010 (see Page 2). Photo courtesy of Scott Johnson, Indiana Department of Natural Resources.***

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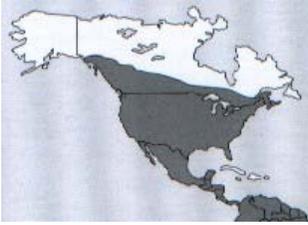
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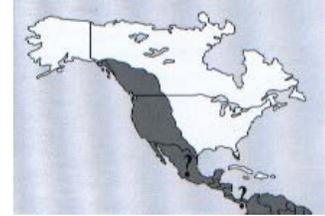
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# NEWS FROM THE BLANK SPACE

←Historic range of the cougar.

Range of the cougar ca. 1990→



Maps of the cougar's range produced in the 1990s show a vast blank space in eastern and central North America—habitat that the big cat used to occupy before it was eliminated by persecution and near-elimination of its natural prey, the white-tailed deer. Above are maps from Kevin Hansen's 1992 book Cougar: The American Lion. The Cougar Rewilding Foundation is dedicated to the restoration of cougar populations in suitable areas of the eastern portion of that blank space and advocates responsible management when they recolonize former habitat.

**Indiana—Two confirmations, one cougar?** The only two confirmations in the eastern United States outside of Florida since January 1, 2009 come from Indiana.

**Clay County Confirmation:** On October 10, 2009, Paul Harbour was bow hunting from a tree stand near Brazil (2) and saw a cougar on the ground below. He snapped some photos of it with his cell phone. A district biologist with the Indiana Department of Natural Resources (DNR) went to the site and ground truthed the pictures. At that time, the biologist assumed this cougar was Donner. Donner, featured in the November 2007 issue of the ECF Update 9,<sup>1</sup> had escaped from the Exotic Feline Rescue Center near Center Point (1) on January 5, 2007, about 7 miles from where Harbour took his photos.



***One of Paul Harbour's photos, reproduced with his permission.***



**Greene County Confirmation:** That opinion changed when the DNR heard reports of a cougar in a rural part of Greene County east of Bloomfield (3). A conservation officer got a call from a citizen who reported credible evidence. Scott Johnson, the DNR's nongame mammal biologist in the Division of Fish & Wildlife, found tracks and the carcass of an eviscerated deer covered with a pile of leaves. He set out remote cameras on April 30th. Around 2:30 am on May 1st, the camera captured multiple images of the cougar (see photo on the cover of this newsletter).

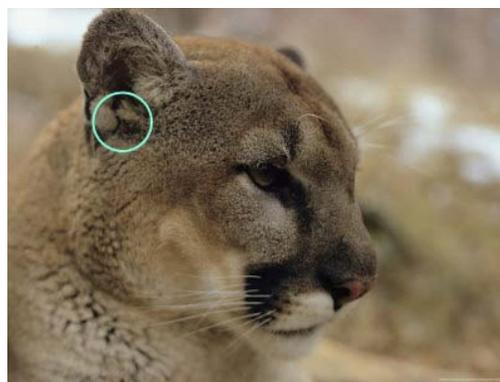
The cougar in the Greene County photo could be either an adult female or an immature male. (Mature males develop large heads and massive shoulders.) Photos of the tracks were sent for evaluation to Linda Sweanor, the co-author of the comprehensive book DESERT PUMA. She said that the width of the rear heel pad was within the size range of a subadult male or a mature female.<sup>2</sup>

Joe Taft, Founder and Director of the Exotic Feline Rescue Center, said he was 99.9% sure that the Greene County cougar was not Donner. He would need a head-on shot to be absolutely sure.<sup>3</sup> Donner was 8 to 10 years old when she escaped. She would have been 11 to 13 years old in May—elderly for a cougar. The Greene County cougar appeared to be in too good shape for an old cat. By age 10 or 11, a cougar's teeth are worn down or lost, leading to poor nutrition and a rough coat. The Greene County cougar appeared to be in the prime of life.

Some people who examined the broadside view of the cat noticed what appears to be a band on the lower part of its ear. When the original, high-resolution image is enlarged, some think that they see a shiny steel or copper band, but another who examined this image disagreed. Two possibilities come to mind if the cougar did have a band on its ear: either it was an ear tag affixed by a cougar researcher in the Black Hills or elsewhere in the West, or it was formerly in captivity. The images were submitted to Sweanor, who confirmed that it was not typical of the kind of ear tag used by cougar researchers. These tags generally are placed in the center of the ear so that they are easily visible during recaptures and in remote camera photos.<sup>4</sup>



**Left: Close-up of possible band on ear of the Greene County cougar. Right: Natural fold in ear of cougar at Big Cat Rescue; Below: Female with GPS collar and ear tags placed by Ken Logan, Uncompahgre Plateau, Colorado.**



We submitted a high-resolution close-up of the ear to Big Cat Rescue in Florida for their evaluation. Jamie Veronica, President, responded that the apparent ring was “just a trick of light and shadow.” She sent us photos of one of their cougars showing a natural fold in that position.<sup>5</sup>

So almost certainly the band, if there is one, does not demonstrate that the cougar came from the Black Hills or elsewhere in the West. If it is a band, it must have been inserted by a private owner.

Cougars are classified as a protected exotic species in Indiana. This seems strange because cougars are not exotic; they once occurred throughout the state but were extirpated by the 1850s. An administrative rule adopted in 2006<sup>6</sup> prohibits the taking of exotic mammals and intentionally releasing them into the wild in Indiana. As used in this rule, “exotic mammal” means a species that is: (1) not native to Indiana; or (2) extirpated from Indiana and either: (A) a wild animal; or (B) a feral animal other than a dog or cat. “Exotic species” as defined by the rule cannot be intentionally released into the wild; if one escapes, a conservation officer must be notified within 24 hours. Feral hogs can be killed at any time; other species of exotic mammals can be taken by a landowner or tenant when causing damage to property.



## **South Dakota & Wyoming--Up to 90 cougars will be killed by hunters in the Black Hills by March 31, 2011. Female killed on prairies in 2009.**

Cougar hunting quotas in the Black Hills continue to be a major concern of the Cougar Rewilding Foundation. The Hills are important to us as advocates of cougar restoration in the Midwest and East because they are the first of three regions which cougars have recolonized after they were extirpated in the early 1900s. (The other two are the Badlands in SW North Dakota and the Pine Ridge area of NW Nebraska.) The Hills are demonstrably good cougar habitat despite being the most densely roaded national forest in the US, a fact that has put to rest claims that cougars require vast areas of wilderness to thrive and thus could not establish breeding populations in the East.

An island of excellent cougar habitat extending eastward from Wyoming out onto the Great Plains, the Black Hills have been a jumping-off point for young males dispersing from their birthplaces in search of territories of their own. The greatest number of these subadults head northwest into Montana, but some head east. Individuals outfitted with radio collars in the Black Hills have travelled hundreds of miles, as far as NE Oklahoma; Saskatoon, Saskatchewan; and the NE corner of Minnesota.

We need to know what impact cougars are having on the ecosystems of the Black Hills. Are they attacking people and livestock? And perhaps most important, are they decreasing opportunities for hunters of deer and other ungulates? So far, no attacks have been confirmed on people in the Black Hills, and very few on livestock. But even more important than biological facts are political realities. The possibility that cougars are significantly reducing deer and elk numbers have not been scientifically demonstrated and was not a major concern in the last Black Hills deer management plan,<sup>7</sup> but some hunters are convinced that this is the case.<sup>8</sup>

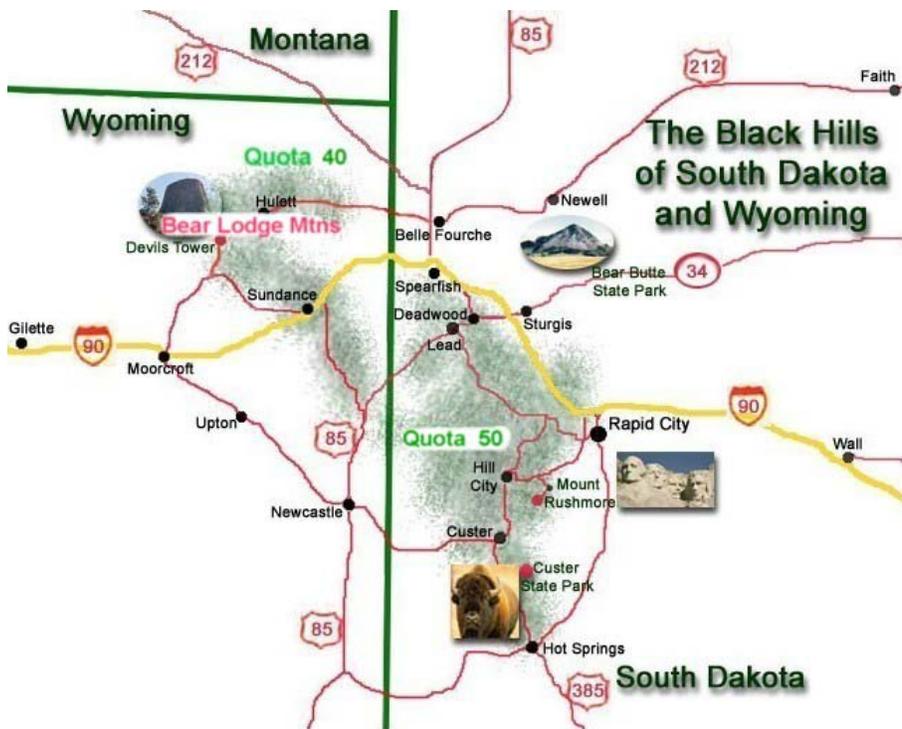
South Dakota was last mentioned in the June 2009 issue of this newsletter. The Commission of the Department of Game,

Fish and Parks (DFG&P) had just decided to set the quota for the 2010 season at 40, or 25 females, whichever came first. The DFG&P staff had recommended 35 or 20 females. The commissioners said the reason for the increased quota was to reduce conflicts with humans (which have been rare, beyond the simple fact of their existence, which makes some people uneasy) and to reduce the number of deer and elk killed by cougars. The season began on January 1, 2010 and was scheduled to run to March 31st unless the quota was reached earlier. It was, on February 10th. The presence of snow, making tracking easy, and the use of predator calling were responsible for successful hunts.

Among the 40 killed were 24 females and five kittens of both sexes. The females may have left as many as 24 orphaned kittens that would die of starvation. The DGF&P maintains that the loss of kittens caused by hunter harvest of their mothers is "biologically insignificant to the continued survival of the whole population."<sup>9</sup>

The 2010 season was the fifth cougar hunting season in the Black Hills. The first season, in 2005, saw 13 killed. In subsequent years, 15 were taken in 2006, 18 in 2007, and 26 in 2008 (no season was held in 2009 because the beginning of the season was moved to January 1, 2010).

The DGF&P conducted a survey of 8,501 residents of the Black Hills in the fall of 2008. A majority (56.2%) wanted the population to remain the same or increase.<sup>10</sup> In the early part of 2010 the DGF&P held 11 public meetings in the vicinity of the Black Hills. They encountered a wide range of opinions, from those opposed to all cougar hunting to those wishing an open season with no kill limits. Among the attendees, 355 returned surveys. Among these people, presumably more interested in cougars than a random sample of Black Hills residents, a large majority (89.4%) wanted the number of cougars to stay the same or be reduced.<sup>11</sup> The DGF&P concluded that overall, South



Dakotans want to have cougars in the Black Hills, but fewer of them.<sup>12</sup>

The DGF&P staff recommended a quota of 40 for the upcoming 2011 season, which will begin on January 1st. The Commission, which ultimately establishes wildlife policy, wanted a larger quota to “slash” the cougar population, so in July, they decided on a quota of 50 or 30 females. They solicited public input on their proposal in late July and again in early October. They received more than 100 comments in July, including one from the CRF, and more in October. (The CRF sent out an ALERT in October.) The

final decision was made on October 7th. Twenty-five citizens testified: 14 wanted a lower quota or no cougar hunting, and 10 supported the Commission’s recommended quota or even more. Supporters of the higher quota said that cougars are decreasing deer, elk and other ungulate populations. It is interesting that the DGF&P makes no such claims. However, approximately 300 deer hunters submitted an online petition calling for a high cougar quota.<sup>13</sup>

For the first time, cougars will be hunted within 71,000-acre Custer State Park. Hound hunting was considered within the park, but ultimately the Commission decided to continue to ban the use of dogs throughout the Black Hills. The fee for a cougar hunting was upped from \$15.00 to \$25.00, except in the state park, where it will cost \$155.00.

**Quota of 40 Set for Wyoming Portion of the Black Hills:** The Black Hills and the almost contiguous Bear Lodge Mountains extend into northeastern Wyoming and include approximately one third of the cougar habitat in the Hills. On July 29th the Wyoming Game & Fish Commission approved a quota of 40 in their portion of the Black Hills/Bear Lodge Mountains. The Wyoming cougar hunt began on September 1st and will end on March 31, 2011<sup>14</sup>, unless it is filled earlier. As of November 15, 2010, a total of 37 cougars had been killed.

**How Many Cougars are in the Black Hills?** In 2007 and 2009 the DGF&P estimated there were 250 cougars in the Black Hills. In a presentation in March 2010, John Kanta, Regional Wildlife Manager for the DGF&P, elaborated: 38 adult males, 102 adult females, and 110 dependent young. In August, the agency dropped its estimate to 223 to account for the 2010 “harvest.”<sup>10</sup> How this estimate was reached is unknown because the DGF&P will not share their data or calculations with the public. Four different people outside the DGF&P, working independently and using available information, concluded that the population size was probably overestimated, if for no other reason than kittens were included in the tally. If the population is less than the DGF&P’s announced estimate, then a significantly greater percentage will be killed in the upcoming cougar season. The continued existence of the Black Hills population could even be endangered.

In 2008 the Better Government Association ranked state of South Dakota No. 50 in the nation for transparency. This situation was partially rectified in 2009 by the passage of Senate Bill 147:

Public Access to Records.<sup>15</sup> However, the bottom of Page 8 states, “No elected or appointed official or employee of the state or any political subdivision may be compelled to provide documents, records, or communications used for the purpose of decisional or deliberative process arising from that person’s official duties.”<sup>16</sup> So it is uncertain if interested citizens outside the DGF&P will be allowed to see their calculations

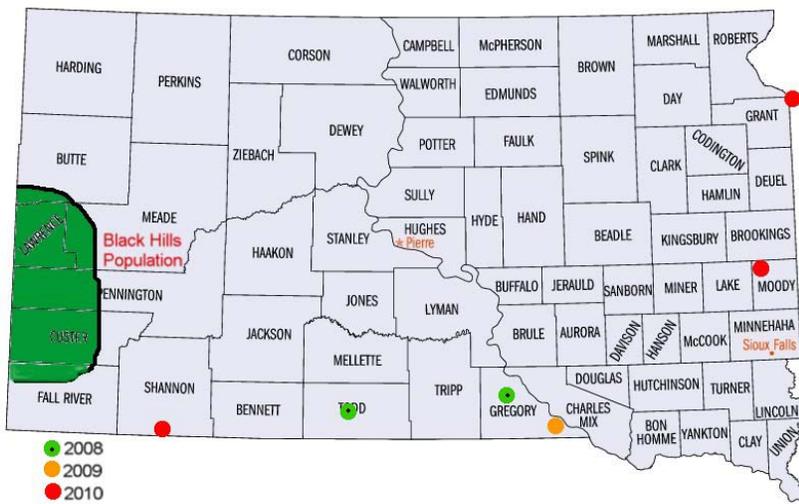
Since 1998 up to March 2010, the DGF&P had spent \$1.5 million on cougar studies. The funding came primarily from sportsmen. The DGF&P’s overall budget comes solely from sportsmen.

Despite the revised plan’s<sup>10</sup> statement that “it is important that varying opinions be sought out and considered in a well-reasoned way” that “will help avoid a perception that a select group is developing recommendations,” (p. 14), the department has clearly denied the wishes of South Dakota citizens, the overwhelming majority of solicited public comments, the recommendations of both outside biologists and *Cougar Management Guidelines*,<sup>35</sup> as well as cougar advocates. No compromise or revision of the plan, except for the Game Commission’s recommendation to *increase* the quota, appears to have ever been considered. The public comment phase of the plan was an unmitigated charade.

For all the DGF&P’s claims of adopting a holistic cougar management approach and balancing scientific research with public opinion, select groups who lobbied to see the Black Hills cougar population reduced, indeed, drove this policy.

**Confirmations outside the Black Hills and vicinity since January 1, 2008:** Discounting locations of radio-collared cougars tracked by students at South Dakota State University, which

are not available to the public, we know of two confirmations on the prairies in 2008, one in 2009, and two in 2010. The death of a female in Gregory County in 2009 is significant. Only one other female has been documented on the prairies of South Dakota, Nebraska and North Dakota east of re-colonized breeding populations: a female shot near Howard, Miner County on December 2, 2007.



- 10-13-08: 120-lb male killed by archer in Gregory Co. Exact location not specified
- 12-08: 3-year-old male killed illegally on Rosebud Reservation
- 11-26-09: 2-year-old female killed by landowner north of Bonesteel, Gregory County.
- 4-27-10: 3-year-old male tranquilized & relocated near Pine Ridge on Reservation
- 11-09-10: 130-lb male killed in Moody Co. east of Nunda, ca. 20 miles from MN border
- [9-13-10: Remote camera confirmation E of Ortonville, MN, ca 5 miles east of SD border]

**Zero tolerance policy in developed areas:** Since January 1, 2009, we are aware of 8 cougars being killed in developed areas, including small villages and the Rapid City Airport. Among them were an adult female and her 55-lb male kitten that were eliminated after a cougar-killed goat and a deer were found in Hot Springs. In some instances, the DGF&P is now hazing cougars from the fringes of developed areas. A young cougar found in a tree in Hot Springs was shot with buckshot and allowed to escape on April 24, 2010. In March, 2010, officials in Deadwood

announced that they were stocking up on rubber bullets to drive encroaching cougars from the fringes of the town. Real bullets will still be used on cougars that show up downtown.

## Iowa—Pella Wildlife Company works to gain cougar recognition after a

**killing in December 2009:** On December 14th, Raymond Goebel Jr. spotted a cougar reclining on a horizontal branch near Marengo in Iowa County. He went off to make a phone call to ascertain that it was legal to kill cougars in the state. Learning that anyone with a hunting license can kill one at any time, he returned 40 minutes later. The cougar was still in the tree, so he shot it. It was a young male weighing about 125 pounds.

The last native cougar was killed in Iowa in 1909 or earlier. In the last ten years, four other cougars have been killed in the state, all young males. One was a roadkill (2001) and three others were shot by hunters (one in 2003 and two in 2004). There have also been some confirmed tracks and credible, but unconfirmed sightings.



Several people objected to the killing at Marengo and began working on a package to present to the state legislature for the protection of cougars and black bears, neither of which have legal status in Iowa. Prior to last year, Ron Andrews of the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) presided over more than 250 public informational meetings on cougars in Iowa and elsewhere in the Midwest.<sup>18</sup>

Ron DeArmond, founder and CEO of the Pella Wildlife Company, has been working to gain protected status for cougars, creating a series of wildlife education programs entitled **“Predator, Prey, and People”** for school-age children; families; and agricultural, conservation and civic organizations; providing accurate information about black bears, wolves and cougars returning to Iowa.<sup>19</sup>



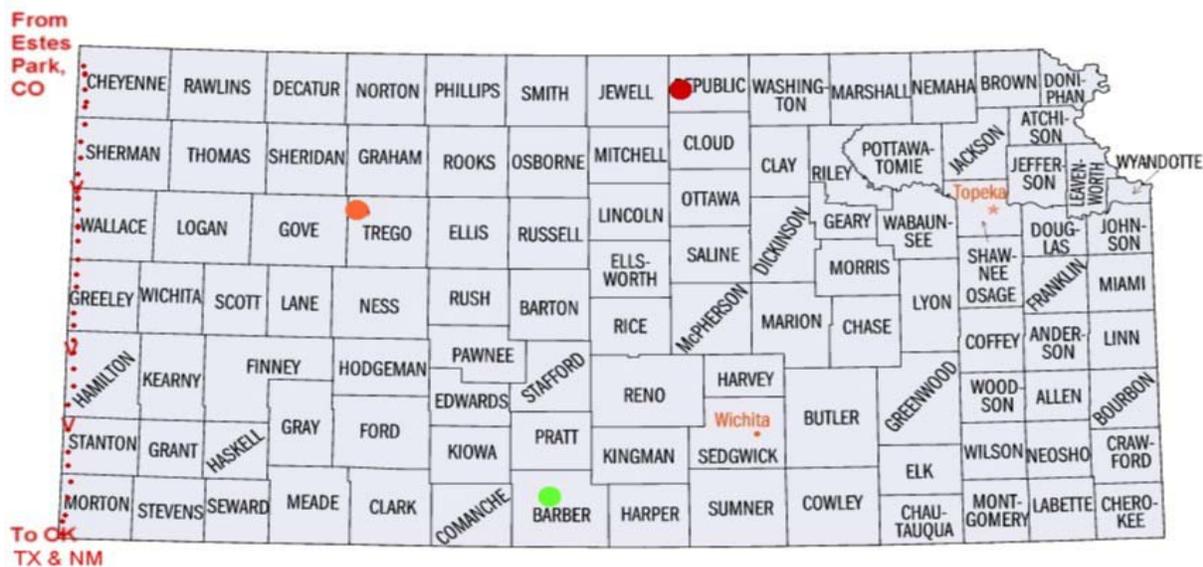
Ron reports that the program, **“Cougars - Iowa's Big Cat”**, has been well received. It covers behavior, habitat, impact on agriculture, cougar-human interactions, and conservation tourism. This program has been presented at Pheasant Fest (the National Convention for Pheasants Forever), Bald Eagle Days (a special event presented by the US Army Corps of Engineers), various libraries, and at the 2010 Iowa State Fair, where Pella has its own 300-seat theatre. Teaching species identification is a big part of the process, showing the difference between domestic cats, bobcats and cougars.

**Ron DeArmond giving a presentation.**

Cougars are not in the Iowa code so the DNR cannot spend resources to manage and monitor this species. Ron hopes that a bill will be introduced to the next session of the state legislature that will allow the DNR to develop management plans for all of Iowa's wildlife.

## Kansas—Four confirmations since 2007; proposed hunting season rejected by legislature:

On October 12, 2009 a hunter in a tree stand saw a cougar walking into a pile of corn that had been set out to attract deer in northwest WaKeeney, Trego County. He snapped some photos, the second confirmation of a cougar in the state since 1904. The first was a young individual shot in rural Barber County near Medicine Lodge near the Oklahoma border in November 2007.



**Confirmations in Kansas since 1904:** Green dot: 2007; Orange dot: 2009; red dotted line, approximate route of young male released in Estes Park, Colorado; red dot: 2010.

A young male kitten found near Firestone, Colorado became the third confirmation. Too young to survive on its own, it was reared in captivity by a wildlife rehabilitator and released in October 2009 near Estes Park when it was 11 months old, outfitted with a GPS collar. The collar transmits the location of the wearer every three hours; biologists download the coordinates every month.

The young cat went east from the Rockies and entered Kansas in Cheyenne County on March 5, 2010. It headed south, never more than 12 or 14 miles from the Colorado border, entered the Oklahoma Panhandle from Morton County on March 25th, went through the tip of Texas and from there into New Mexico. Altogether, it had travelled at least 1000 miles.

In mid-April Matt Peek, furbearer biologist with the Kansas Department of Wildlife & Parks, used data points supplied by the Colorado Division of Wildlife and visited the actual localities that the young cat had visited on its journey through the state. It took shelter in abandoned buildings and in a shelterbelt near a home, where its tracks were confirmed by the residents. It captured turkey, pheasant, 2 coyotes, a raccoon, a porcupine, small raptors and possibly a deer. It did not attack livestock.

Finally, Caleb Mahin, an archery deer hunter, had a big surprise waiting for him when he pulled the memory card from a remote camera he'd placed near the Republican River in Republic County, Kansas. Just before midnight on October 18, 2010, it captured a sequence of 8 photos of a cougar walking by, almost like slow motion photography.<sup>20</sup>

**Legislation to establish cougar hunting season in Kansas fails to pass:** In January 2010, Representative Mitch Holmes, who comes from cattle country in west-central Kansas, introduced a bill to the legislature that would have instituted a mountain lion hunting season. It's currently

legal to kill a cougar if it is threatening or attacking livestock or humans or is on private property. Kansas has no large tracts of public land, so that's close to an open season. However, it is illegal for private individuals to possess a carcass, a measure designed to discourage sport hunting of cougars. With only two recent confirmations at the time, the bill failed to pass. No attacks on livestock or humans have been recorded.

**Oklahoma—Two confirmations since December 2008:** A remote camera captured a cougar at a deer feeding station near Atoka on December 22, 2009. The locality happens to be almost exactly on the potential dispersal route from northeastern Texas into the Midwest identified by LaRue and Nielsen in their 2008 report.<sup>21</sup> In late March 2010, a young male passed through the western tip of the panhandle on its way from the southwestern tip of Kansas into Texas and New Mexico (see article on Kansas above).

Also in March, good news came from the Cherokee Nation Tribal Council. They passed an act designating black bears, bald eagles and cougars culturally protected species. The act made it a crime to take or possess these species in Indian Country, with certain exceptions such as eagle feathers obtained through a repository or rehabilitation efforts for a live animal. In the rest of Oklahoma, the Department of Wildlife Conservation lists the mountain lion as a game species with a closed season.



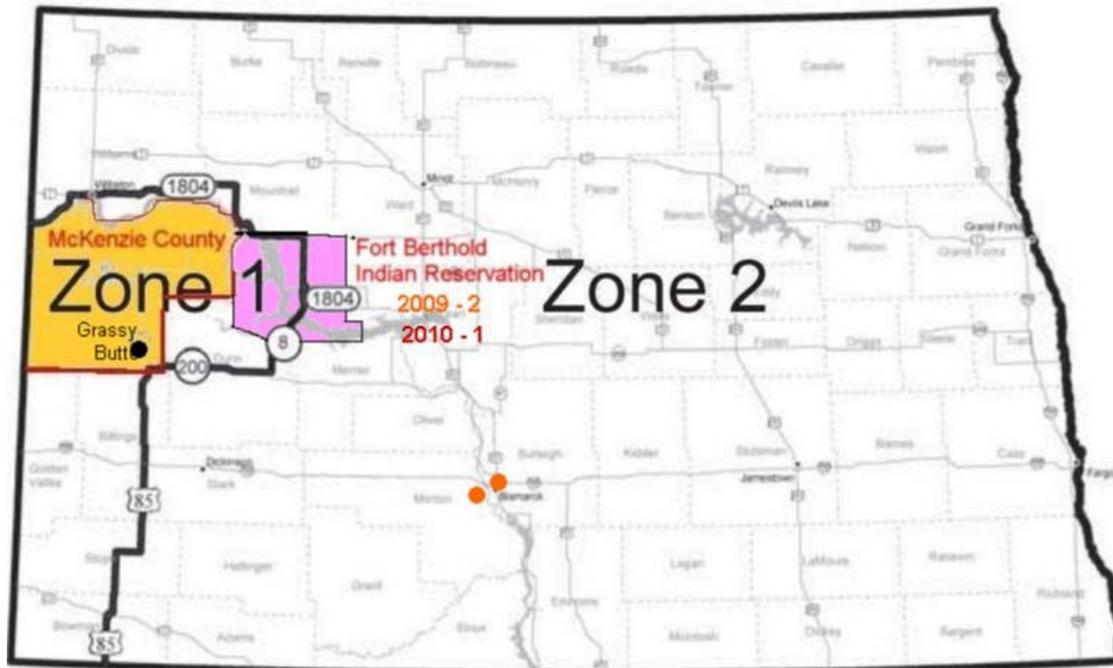
**North Dakota—Increased hunting quota filled early:** North Dakota's sixth cougar hunting season began on September 3, 2010. It was set to end on March 31, 2011 unless the quota of 10 in Zone 1 was filled earlier. It was, on November 12th. Unlike neighboring South Dakota, where the use of hounds is prohibited, hounds could have been used after December 1st. No cougars have been killed in Zone 2 this year except on the Fort Berthold Indian Reservation, to the best of our knowledge.

***Scene in the North Dakota Badlands near Grassy Butte.***

The state's first "experimental season" began in September 2005 and was scheduled to run until March 12, 2006. The quota of 5 was reached on January 15th. In 2006 the agency made it official: they have a breeding population. Zone 1 was established to encompass that population; the rest of the state was designated Zone 2. Quotas were set for Zone 1, with unlimited quotas for Zone 2. Only once has a cougar been killed by a hunter in Zone 2, on New Year's Day in 2008 in Sargent County in the northeastern corner of the state. All five previous quotas were filled: 2005-06: 5; 2006-07: 5; 2007-08: 5; 2008-09: 8; and 2009-2010: 8. Most of the



confirmations and sightings have been in McKenzie County, especially around the tiny community of Grassy Butte in the Little Missouri National Grassland.



**Known Confirmations in North Dakota Outside Cougar Hunting Zone 1 in 2009 and 2010. Orange: 2009 Red: 2010**

Asked why the quota was increased to ten for the season beginning this past September, Stephanie Tucker, Furbearer Biologist for North Dakota Game & Fish Department, said: "We increased the mountain lion quota from 8 to 10 in Zone 1 because we had a large number of verified reports after the hunting season closed last year, and necropsies indicated the population in the Badlands is healthy and reproducing at expected levels." <sup>22</sup>

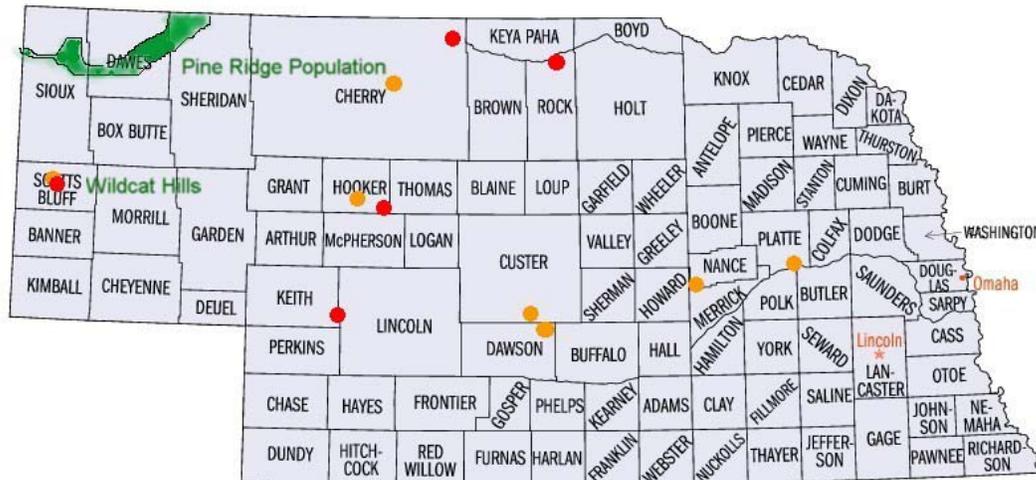
Does the fact that the quota of ten was filled well before the end of the season indicate that the Badlands cougar population is thriving? We can't say without further analysis; perhaps it only means that more hunters were abroad this year.

**Confirmations outside Zone 1** since January 1, 2009 have been few. On November 27, 2009, authorities shot a young male in Bismarck. And on June 12, 2010, Phil Mastrangelo of US Wildlife Services reported that a cougar had been killing sheep west of Mandan, west of Bismarck. As far as we know, this depredating cougar was never captured.

Most of the action outside Zone 1 seems to be taking place on the Fort Berthold Indian Reservation. Wildlife within the reservation is managed by the Fort Berthold Fish and Wildlife Division. Reservation biologists communicate with the Game and Fish Department but make their own management decisions.<sup>22</sup> The Three Affiliated Tribes of Fort Berthold are scheduling their own hunting seasons. Two males were killed in late December 2009 during the 2009-2010 season. Another cougar season began on September 3, 2010 and will run until March 27, 2011, unless the quota of 5 is filled sooner.<sup>23</sup> Outside the limits of hunting seasons, a 120-lb male was shot on tribal lands near Mandaree on June 8, 2010. It was in Ron Brugh's yard, "way too close" to where his grandchildren were playing.

## Nebraska—breeding population recolonizes the Pine Ridge area:

Nebraska's first confirmation in modern times was in 1991. Since then, more than 110 cougar incidents have been documented. This past April, the Game and Parks Commission (GPC) made it official: a breeding population has become established in the Pine Ridge area in the northwestern part of the state. The first females and kittens were recorded there in 2007. The Black Hills of South Dakota, just to the north, is the likely source of this population. The GPC is keeping track of new confirmations on a map on their website.<sup>24</sup>



**Confirmations in Nebraska, January 1, 2009 to date. Orange dot: 2009. Red dot: 2010. Adapted from Nebraska Game & Parks Commission online map.<sup>1</sup>**

Among the cougars that were sexed, 8 males and two females were identified. Both females, killed in 2009 and 2010, were in Scottsbluff, which is at the northeastern edge of the Wildcat Hills. So far, no instances of livestock depredation and no attacks on humans have been documented.

This past January, a bill was introduced to the Nebraska legislature and passed with the support of GPC. It formalized the existing policy toward cougars, allowing people to kill individuals that are preying on livestock or threatening people. Landowners with aggressive and/or depredating cougars can get a 30-day permit. They are required to turn the carcass over to the agency, a policy that discourages killing cougars as trophies.

At one time, the GPC said that cougars were protected in the state on their website. They no longer say this. Now they state, "A management plan will continue to provide protocols for handling a variety of situations involving mountain lions in Nebraska. A

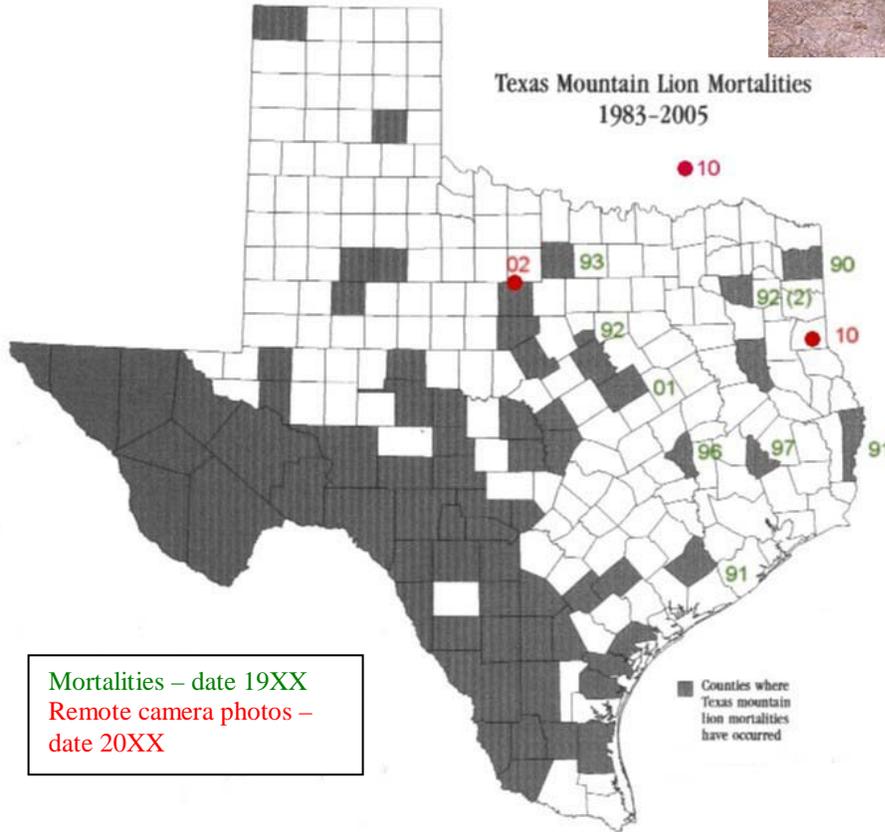
combination of understanding and tolerance will allow us to coexist with mountain lions and prevent us from repeating the mistake of extirpating this magnificent feline from Nebraska once again." <sup>24</sup>

Consistent with this changed policy, the GPC appears to have adopted a zero tolerance policy toward cougars that show up in developed areas, including near buildings on ranches. Three have been killed on ranches on the southern fringe of the Pine Ridge area so far this year. On February 21st an adult female tracked to her hiding place under a horse trailer was shot by an official of GPC. A state wildlife agent shot another, a young male, from a tree near a ranch house on September 14th. Three days later, another young male was shot by a woman as he watched her free a goat caught in a fence. He'd been hanging around the ranch buildings for about a week. Also, on October 18th, a GPC official killed a 67-lb female outside a house just north of Scottsbluff.

**East Texas:** A remote camera captured a cougar at a deer feeder near Deadwood in Panola County, on the Louisiana state line, about 40 miles SW of Shreveport. A wildlife biologist ground-truthed the photo. The owner of the camera that took the photo approached the Texas Parks & Wildlife Department (TPWD). He did not want his name made public.



Cougars are extremely rare in East Texas. The last confirmation we are aware of was a remote camera photo taken in 2002 on the Clay-Jack county line.



**Known cougar mortalities & remote camera confirmations—from a TPWD brochure and the Cougar Network’s Confirmation Maps.<sup>25</sup>**

Texas is the only state with a viable cougar population that neither classifies them as a game animal with designated hunting seasons and quotas nor protects them. Anyone with a valid hunting license can kill them at any time. Some landowners kill every cougar they see or contract with private trappers to remove them. But others don’t allow any hunting,

effectively creating cougar sanctuaries. As of 2007, an average of 30 cougars were being killed annually, most of them in South Texas. During that year, the report on a study done on the DNA of 89 cougars killed in Texas estimated approximately 5,600 cougars were in the state.<sup>26</sup> Most of them live in the western and southern portions.<sup>27</sup>

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**In the Next Issue:** Confirmations are coming from Michigan, Wisconsin, and especially Minnesota. Also, we have news from southern Ontario and Quebec. And we’ll be looking at the situation in central Canada. Although it’s commonly assumed that the cougars showing up in the Lake States are coming from the Black Hills of South Dakota, we know of few recent confirmations on the Prairies of that state and North Dakota. Could they be coming from Nebraska, Saskatchewan or Manitoba? We’ll be considering these possibilities.

## Conservation of wild felids: **A tale of two countries and one cat**

By John W. Laundré\*

What are the problems facing felid conservation in the western hemisphere? Is it habitat destruction? Is it uncontrolled hunting/poaching? Loss of prey base? Climate change? All these and more have been listed as causing declines in felid populations, and as importantly, hindering attempts to restore populations in areas where they have been reduced or extirpated. Though important in their own right, I argue that often the over-riding problem for felid conservation is a lack of local public resolve or will for that conservation. Let me illustrate with an example.

Envision a felid species in two countries, A and B. Both countries are approximately the same size. Country A has 1.5 times more people than country B. Originally this felid species was found throughout both these countries. About 70-100 years ago, this felid was extirpated from approximately two thirds of country A. In country B, its habitat has been reduced and degraded in approximately a quarter of the country but it can still be found over most areas. In country A the majority of the habitat of the remaining range of the species is heavily impacted by human activity, there are few (<1.0%) wilderness areas. In country B, most of the remaining range is pristine wilderness. Population estimates of this species in country A are around 30,000 and in country B probably around 100,000.

Based on the above, one might conclude that the fate of this species is more precarious in country A and that there would be more national and international concern for its survival. However, this is not the case. In country A this species is still legally hunted, for sport. In country B, the species is officially protected. In country B there are international efforts, involving millions of dollars, much of it from country A, to recuperate this species in the affected areas. In country A, except for a relatively small (< 200 animals) isolated population, there is no such international nor national effort for its recuperation in the two thirds of the country

where it has been lost, though there seems ample habitat and prey available. Even for the isolated population, the efforts are centered on survival of the remaining animals, in a wild zoo as it were, not in expanding the population into its former range.

If you haven't guessed yet, the two countries are the United States and Brazil and the species in question is the cougar. The reason for this comparison is to demonstrate what I mean about the lack of public will regarding wild felid conservation. The United States, with its numerous conservation groups, is well known and respected worldwide in the efforts to conserve species such as tigers, lions, cheetahs, jaguars, and yes, even cougars ... in other countries. For other countries, topics centering on ecosystem roles, keystone species, health of the ecosystem, etc. dominate the arguments for re-establishing felids. Rarely do you hear excuses for NOT trying to recuperate populations. Switch the topic to cougars in the Eastern U.S. and the same people will begin to talk about how unfeasible it is, the danger it will present to people (themselves?) living there, how it could devastate local wild game (deer) populations, and how bringing "exotic" cougars back may not be ecologically desirable.

Why this dual standard? Although the eastern cougar was one of the original species listed in the Endangered Species Act, why aren't groups championing the cause for its restoration in the East? Why are they happy it seems, to spend most of their effort and money on trying to save a, literally, drowning population of "panthers" in southern Florida? Even then, public campaigns, arguments in and out of the courts, center on saving the remaining habitat in an area that will eventually be flooded by global warming. Meanwhile the official Fish and Wildlife recommendation to EXPAND this population to the north languishes on some bureaucrat's desk.

Further to the north, official positions are "cougars are not here and we really don't want them back anytime soon!" Though officially protected, it is assumed any cougars seen, and often shot, in the wild were these non-native exotics. Even if it proves different, such as the recent incident in Georgia, little happens. When a hunter shot a cougar in that state, everyone conveniently assumed it had to be one of those exotic cats. No punishment for killing an endangered species was demanded. When the cougar in Georgia was found to be a Florida panther and was genetically linked to a wild animal, there was still no official reaction. It is that lack of local public will that I contend can frustrate, stall, and derail recuperation of wild felid species. Even if we have the resources AND the habitat for restoring a wild felid population, if we lack the public will to do it, it will not happen.

But why do we lack the public will? Why can't we muster enough public and organizational support for cougar reintroduction in the East? And if we can't here, what does that mean for more distant efforts in other countries? I think the problem centers on what I call the "not in my back yard" syndrome. People who can get fired up about conserving some wildlife species on the other side of the world suddenly become timid and apologetic when it is of a species "in their own back yard." Suddenly, the enthusiasm, the will, wanes away, replaced by the realism of cougars, not in far away Brazil but RIGHT HERE! Because everywhere in the world is in someone's back yard, it is not just a problem in the eastern U.S. but a global one for wild felid conservation. Therefore, if we analyze the eastern cougar situation, it may help us better understand how we can best help wild felids survive in the back yards of the world.

So... Why not in our own back yard? I think the answer to that is because people in the East are literally afraid of big large predators in general and of the cougar in particular. We like to see and admire them in the zoos and in the national parks...elsewhere but not here. Why are we afraid? Part of it seems ancestral, but a major part of it in general is

how we depict predators as bad and dangerous. Predators are still portrayed as vicious evil monsters preying on poor, innocent Bambi. The villains in cartoons even today are still mostly predators, many of them felids. This almost innate bias against predators makes it easy for opponents of cougar, or any predator reintroduction, to fabricate horror stories of pets...and children, falling prey to the ferocious attacks of a cougar. Any discussion of cougar reintroduction in the East becomes quickly dominated by the fear factor. It is this fear, based on, as we all know, misconceptions, that is keeping cougars out of the eastern U.S. and likely is the underlying emotion hindering felid conservation worldwide. We don't want them in our back yard because they are dangerous and they scare us!

The key then to fostering a public will to champion, to embrace, cougar reintroductions in the East is to change this attitude of fear. This is important because if we can't change attitudes of the local "natives" in the eastern U.S., how do we expect to do so in less "advanced" areas? How do we change this attitude of fear, of the eastern cougar, of felids in other parts of the hemisphere...the world? I think the example of the eastern cougar not only points out the importance of public attitudes in conservation efforts but that often those attitudes are based on irrational fears and misconceptions. Unless we can counter those fears and misconceptions, we will not be able to convince the people of the East, even conservation minded ones, to accept cougar reintroductions in their back yard. So the "natives" in the East and other parts of the world need to be convinced that 1) they have nothing to fear, 2) cougars make good neighbors, and 3) wild felids are valuable ecosystem components. The obvious answer to how that can be done is through education, and lots of it!

Public education then, becomes the most powerful tool conservation biologists have. However, we need to become better skilled at using this tool. Though they exist, a good felid biologist who is also a good



public relations person is a rarity. I guess part of it is because what we do is so much fun, we don't have time for other things! Another part is probably because we are what we study, mostly secretive, solitary! Whatever the case, we need to break out more, be not just scientific but social advocates for the species we study and admire. As we have seen so many times lately in politics, he who controls the information (true or false), controls public opinion. We as felid biologists have that information, we as felid conservationists must get that information out. We know the beneficial ecological role cougars play, we know that they are less dangerous than the neighbor's dog, we know they will not decimate wild game populations, we know all this and more.

We know what to tell, we just need to tell all this to more than just ourselves at scientific meetings. Be it cougars in the East or other felids elsewhere, the will to conserve them has to come from the public, but developing that public will lies directly on our shoulders.

Lastly, again speaking for the eastern cougar, we need to be advocates for wild felids "in our own back yards." We have to remember that species conservation begins at home. If we don't advocate for local felid species, what we fight for in distant lands must truly ring hollow to local inhabitants. Also, what we do for local wild felids helps define what can be done in other countries and for other species. We are after all, the melting pot of world peoples' cultural fears and misconceptions. What we could learn from activism here could help efforts for distant felids in far-away lands. So the not-so-old adage comes home to roost for felid biologists: think globally but act locally. When we all go off to study those "exotic" felids in far-flung lands, let's not forget the local natives that need our help, and the lessons to be learned in providing that help.



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***Ben Shrader's remote cameras, on duty in western Virginia, have not captured a cougar, but they've recorded many beautiful and interesting scenes. This camera was placed at a otter toilet. No scent, bait or attractant was used.***

# FEDERAL EXCISE TAXES ON HUNTING AND COUGAR RESTORATION

By Ben Shrader\*\*

Only a few decades ago, wildlife's survival was very much in doubt. The early settlers had encountered a spectacular abundance of wildlife. But, in their zeal to conquer an untamed continent, they squandered that legacy, wiping out some species and reducing others to a pitiful remnant of their original numbers.



**The North American Model led to the banning of market hunting of waterfowl. US Fish & Wildlife photo.**

But as early as the 1860s, hunters and anglers were becoming alarmed at the disappearance of wildlife. Over the next 90 years, these concerns in the United States and Canada coalesced into the North American Wildlife Conservation Model. The model has two basic tenets: that fish and wildlife are reserved for the non-commercial use of hunters and anglers, and that these resources are to be sustained at optimal levels forever.<sup>28</sup>

The Model rests on seven pillars—the Seven Sisters for Conservation:

- (1) Public trust—wildlife belongs to the public.
- (2) Prohibitions on commerce in wildlife.
- (3) Democratic rule of law. Every citizen has the right to participate in systems of wildlife conservation and use.
- (4) Hunting opportunity for all.
- (5) Non-frivolous use.
- (6) Wildlife is an international resource.
- (7) Scientific management.

But how to fund these goals? The Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act provided the solution. Better known as the Pittman-Robertson (P-R) Act after its principal sponsors, Senator Key Pittman of Nevada and Representative A. Willis Robertson of Virginia, the measure was signed into law by President Franklin D. Roosevelt on September 2, 1937.<sup>29</sup>

P-R provides federal aid to the states and US territories for management and restoration of wildlife with a wildlife restoration fund in the U.S. Treasury. The fund consists of all revenues accruing each fiscal year from 10% excise taxes imposed on certain types of sporting goods, including most types of firearms, ammunition, and bows and arrows. The aid supports a variety of projects, including acquisition and improvement of wildlife habitat as well as research on wildlife management. P-R pays for up to 75 percent of wildlife project costs, with the states putting up at least 25 percent. The assurance of a steady source of earmarked funds has enabled the program's administrators, both state and federal, to plan projects that take years to complete. Short-term strategies seldom come up with lasting solutions where living creatures are involved.

To be eligible for P-R funds for wildlife restoration projects, a state must assent to the provisions of the Act and have laws governing the conservation of wildlife. Additionally, a state must have a law prohibiting the diversion of license fees paid by hunters for any purpose other than the administration of the state's fish and game department. All wildlife-restoration projects aided under the Act must be agreed upon by the US Secretary of the Interior and the fish and game department of the state where the project is located.

The state must submit to the Secretary either a comprehensive fish and wildlife resource management plan or a detailed description of proposed restoration projects. The plans must insure the perpetuation of wildlife resources for economic, scientific and recreational purposes. They must be for at least five years and must be based on long-range projections regarding the **desires and needs of the public**. Upon approval by the Secretary of a state's plan or wildlife restoration project, the state may use the federal funds apportioned under the Act to finance up to 75 percent of the costs of the plan or project.

The Act authorizes funds to be appropriated until expended. Any amount apportioned to a state that is unspent or un-obligated may be used by the Secretary to carry out the provisions of the Migratory Bird Conservation Act. One-half of the revenues accruing to the fund each fiscal year from taxes imposed on pistols, revolvers, bows and arrows must be apportioned among the states based on population. No state, however, may be provided more than three percent or less than one percent of such revenues, and Guam, the Virgin Islands, American Samoa and the Northern Mariana Islands must each be apportioned one-sixth of one percent.<sup>30</sup>

The maintenance of wildlife restoration projects established under the Act is the duty of the states. Apportioned funds may be used by the states for management of wildlife areas and resources, but not for law enforcement or public relations. States may use funds apportioned on the basis of population to pay up to 75 percent of the costs of a hunter safety program, and the

construction and operation of public target ranges.<sup>30</sup> There are other conditions to this somewhat complicated formula on how funding shall be distributed that you may find at referenced sites.

In the more than 70 years since P-R began, over \$2 billion in federal excise taxes has been matched by more than \$500 million in state funds (chiefly from hunting license fees) for wildlife restoration. Benefits to the economy have been equally impressive. National surveys show that hunters now spend some \$10 billion every year on equipment and trips. Non-hunting nature lovers spend even larger sums to enjoy wildlife, on travel and on items that range from bird food to binoculars, from special footwear to camera equipment. Regions famous for their wildlife have directly benefited from this spending, but so have sporting goods and outdoor equipment manufacturers, distributors and dealers. Thousands of jobs have been created.<sup>29</sup>

These funds can be seen in the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries 2010 Budget revenue. They show \$12.8 M (26% of the \$50.0 M total budget) revenue from federal sources of which about one half came from P-R. Looking a bit deeper on the expenditure side, only \$3.6 M (7%) is being spent on biodiversity. Species or beneficiaries named in restoration efforts are: Shad \$236,400, Wetlands \$157,000, Riparian and In-Stream habitat \$133,700, Wildlife Management Areas \$69,500, Wild Turkey \$64,700, and Quail \$ 57,700. Predator is only mentioned in the VA budget under fisheries management. Coyote, although designated a nuisance species in VA, is only mentioned in the budget under "Furbearer Investigations."

It is all too easy for us to drool at the vast amount of funds generated by P-R and imagine what could be done for restoration of cougars in the East with some of those funds. It is even easier to be critical of game departments for not including anything in their budgets for the big cats. Not to be overlooked, though, is the prerequisite that the long-term **desires and needs of the public** would have to be justified to use P-R funds for cougar restoration. Understanding

this, we can begin to identify the challenges such as the attitudes of the general public, hunter attitudes, and troublesome myths about cougars that must be addressed before we can expect to benefit cougars with these funds or ask game departments to begin restorations.

People who live where cougars exist are usually understanding and knowledgeable about their behavior, coexisting for the most part without incident. Public fear and myths about cougars stem from ignorance and misunderstanding. Fear sells in media accounts and that exerts mythical impressions on the public that cougars are dangerous because someone had a confrontation, no matter how rare or unlikely such is to happen. Hunters harbor and repeat myths that cougars already exist in the East and that game departments cover up and ignore their existence. As such myths are repeated they become believed. This phenomenon, known as **source amnesia**, can also lead people to forget the source of a statement and any qualifiers that suggested it untrue. Even when a lie is presented with a disclaimer, people often later remember it as true.<sup>31</sup>

Also problematic to the goal of restoring cougars to the East is the deep divide between hunters and anti hunters who rant that all hunting is wrong. It alienates hunters from being involved in the process and causes them to be defensive with equally repulsive attitudes and rhetoric. Hunters are quick to claim ownership of P-R funds and take credit for all the good things they have done for wildlife restoration, and rightfully so. But the funds are not just for hunters. The funds are public funds for restoration of wildlife whether for hunting or not. Anti hunters need to acknowledge and understand what hunters have done for wildlife management. If they just studied what hunting is really about, some of the rhetoric would abate. Hunters have a lot of adjustment to do also as they slide deeper into minority status. In Virginia only 4%<sup>32</sup> of the population are licensed hunters. Licenses fees pay 40% (\$20 M) of the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries budget. All must realize that the vast majority of the public is non-hunters

who will have the most influence in wildlife management decisions in the future.

In searching for hunting organizations that support predators, none were found favoring wolves. Rather than working to promote ecosystem recovery and biodiversity gains that wolf reintroductions have generated, hunting groups are lobbying hard to reduce the packs throughout the Northern Rockies. Citing recent skirmishes over wolves in the West, there is a risk that the federal courts will divest management of predators from state game departments and hunters. An especially troubling symptom is state game departments relying on flawed scientific data (see South Dakota's revised mountain lion management plan) and reacting to a relatively few misinformed, but highly vocal hunting organizations. Hunters and environmentalists need each other to work on common goals, the major one being education of both.

The following two hunting organizations highlight attributes that benefit all outdoor enthusiasts, not just hunters: Quality Deer Management Association (QDMA) and International Hunter Education Association (IHEA). QDMA is science oriented; an article in their magazine about coyotes demonstrates the professionalism of the organization and their acceptance of scientific facts pertaining to predators. Membership is encouraged for all outdoorsmen. Please read their coyote article "QDM and Coyotes."<sup>33</sup> Many other articles confirm that they are keenly aware of biodiversity and the need for promoting balance and quality of deer by controlling overpopulation.

### **Hunter Submitting To Attitude Adjustment**



Most states now require new hunters to get a hunter education certificate by completing a 2-day hunter education course as a

prerequisite to getting a hunting license. IHEA offers a portion of the classes online. This is a comprehensive course, which covers more topics than hunting, including wildlife habitat, distribution, ethics, etc.<sup>34</sup> These online tutorials and quizzes are recommended for everyone. Be assured that if you take all of the sections, whether you are anti hunter, non-hunter or hunter, you will gain a higher respect for hunters and a better understanding of hunting. Older experienced hunters can also benefit even

though they were not required to take hunter education or had it a number of years ago. Although the courses are comprehensive, they are works in progress, changing as new information becomes available. Everyone needs **EDUCATION** to keep abreast of wildlife funding, laws, ethics, and biodiversity. Because all new hunters have to take this course, it will shape future hunter attitudes, public attitudes and define the duties of wildlife departments.

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***Editor's Note:** Further questions need to be addressed. How is wildlife defined? Are all native vertebrates considered wildlife? If state wildlife agencies and the commissions that make management decisions are predominantly hunters and, in the West, ranchers, is the will of the general public being carried out? Most wildlife species benefit from programs for game species, but not all. How are state nongame programs funded? I hope these questions will be considered in a future issue of this newsletter.*

### **Footnotes for All Articles**

*Most of the information in the articles in the "News from the Blank Space" is derived from news articles copied into the Cougar Rewilding Foundation's blog, Cougar News - <http://easterncougar.org/CougarNews/> These articles are not cited.*

<sup>1</sup>[http://www.easterncougar.org/newltr\\_pdf/ecfnew\\_nov07.pdf](http://www.easterncougar.org/newltr_pdf/ecfnew_nov07.pdf)

<sup>2</sup>Linda Sweanor, email to Helen McGinnis, Nov. 1, 2010

<sup>3</sup>Conversation with Joe Taft, June 11, 2010.

<sup>4</sup>Linda Sweanor, email to Helen McGinnis, June 11, 2010

<sup>5</sup>Jamie Veronica, email to Helen McGinnis July9, 2010

<sup>6</sup>312 IAC 9-3-18.5

<sup>7</sup>South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks, Division of Wildlife. 2008. Black Hills Deer Management Plan: Adaptive Management Game Program. <http://gfp.sd.gov/wildlife/docs/bh-deer-mgmt-plan.pdf>

<sup>8</sup>[http://www.muledeer.org/news/magazine\\_articles/2009/JanFeb09\\_sd\\_mtn\\_lion.html](http://www.muledeer.org/news/magazine_articles/2009/JanFeb09_sd_mtn_lion.html)

<sup>9</sup>South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks. 2010. South Dakota Mountain Lion Management Plan, 2010-2015. Version 10-1. August 2010. Page 9.

<sup>10</sup>South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks. 2010. South Dakota Mountain Lion Management Plan, 2010-2015. Version 10-1. August 2010. Pages 11-12, 51 (Appendix Table 9).

<http://gfp.sd.gov/wildlife/management/plans/default.aspx>

<sup>11</sup>*Ibid.* Page 52 (Table 13).

<sup>12</sup>Woster, Kevin. 2010. Most comments so far seek fewer lions. Rapid City Journal. March 31, 2010. [http://www.rapidcityjournal.com/news/article\\_6053ea52-3d3c-11df-ac29-001cc4c002e0.html](http://www.rapidcityjournal.com/news/article_6053ea52-3d3c-11df-ac29-001cc4c002e0.html)

<sup>13</sup>John Kanta email to Helen McGinnis, August 29, 2010

<sup>14</sup><http://gf.state.wy.us/admin/regulations/pdf/Ch42.pdf>

<sup>15</sup>[http://sunshinereview.org/index.php/SouthDakota\\_transparency\\_legislation](http://sunshinereview.org/index.php/SouthDakota_transparency_legislation)

<sup>16</sup>[legis.state.sd.us/sessions/2009/Bills/SB147SST.pdf](http://legis.state.sd.us/sessions/2009/Bills/SB147SST.pdf)

<sup>17</sup>John Kanta, email to Helen McGinnis, October 28, 2010.

<sup>18</sup>Andrews, Ron. 2008. Mountain lion/cougar status in Iowa: 2000—present in Trends in Iowa wildlife populations and harvest: 2008. Iowa Department of Natural Resources, Richard Leopold, Director, September 2009: Pages 205-208.  
[http://www.iowadnr.gov/wildlife/files/files/Iogbook\\_08log.pdf](http://www.iowadnr.gov/wildlife/files/files/Iogbook_08log.pdf)

<sup>19</sup><http://pellawildlifecompany.web.officelive.com/default.aspx>

For more information on cougar confirmations in Iowa, visit  
[http://homepages.dordt.edu/~mahaffy/mtlion/mtlionshort\\_intro.html](http://homepages.dordt.edu/~mahaffy/mtlion/mtlionshort_intro.html)

<sup>20</sup><http://www.kansas.com/2010/10/26/1559415/mountain-lion-prowls-in-kansas.html>

<sup>21</sup>LaRue, Michelle A., and Clayton K. Nielsen. 2008. Modelling potential dispersal corridors for cougars in midwestern North America using least-cost path methods. *Ecological Modelling* 212 (2008): 372-381.  
<http://www.cougarnet.org/Modelling%20Potential%20Dispersal%20Corridors%20in%20Midwest.pdf>

<sup>22</sup>Stephanie Tucker, email to Helen McGinnis, November 8, 2010.

<sup>23</sup>Three Affiliated Tribes 2010 Small Game and Furbearer Proclamation, Addendum 1: Mountain Lion Season.  
[http://www.mhanation.com/fish&wildlife/hunting/Hunting\\_Proclamations/2010%20Mountain%20Lion%20Addendum.pdf](http://www.mhanation.com/fish&wildlife/hunting/Hunting_Proclamations/2010%20Mountain%20Lion%20Addendum.pdf)

<sup>24</sup><http://outdoornebraska.ne.gov/wildlife/mountainlion.asp>

<sup>25</sup><http://www.cougarnet.org/southeast.html>

<sup>26</sup>Sasser, Ray. Mountain lions deserve to be fair game. *Dallas Morning News*, July 25, 2007.  
<http://www.dallasnews.com/sharedcontent/dws/spt/outdoors/stories/072607dnsposasser.26cf417.html>

<sup>27</sup>Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. Mountain lion research sheds light on elusive feline. *Lone Star Outdoor News*, September 20, 2007.  
<http://www.lonestaroutdoornews.com/content/view/185/27/>

<sup>28</sup><http://www.rmef.org/Hunting/HuntersConservation/>

<sup>29</sup><http://www.fws.gov/southeast/federalaid/pittmanrobertson.html>

<sup>30</sup><http://wildlifelaw.unm.edu/fedbook/pract.html>

<sup>31</sup>Wang, S., and S. Aamodt. Your brain lies to you. *New York Times*, June 27, 2008.  
[http://www.nytimes.com/2008/06/27/opinion/27aamodt.html?\\_r=2&em&ex=1214798400&en=55e3196d3a701a8e0&ei=5087%0A&oref=slogin](http://www.nytimes.com/2008/06/27/opinion/27aamodt.html?_r=2&em&ex=1214798400&en=55e3196d3a701a8e0&ei=5087%0A&oref=slogin)

<sup>32</sup>“Open Letter to Landowners & Deer Hunters...” by Matt Knox, VA Deer Biologist et al.

<sup>33</sup> <http://www.qdma.com/what-we-do/articles/certification-program-readings/qdm-and-coyotes/>

<sup>34</sup><http://homestudy.ihea.com/index.htm>

<sup>35</sup>Cougar Management Guidelines Working Group. 2005. *Cougar Management Guidelines, First Edition*. WildFutures, Bainbridge Island, Washington. 137 pp.

<sup>36</sup>Laundré, J. W. and L. Hernández. 2009. What we know about pumas in Latin America. Pages 76-90 in Hornocker, M and S. Negri. 2009. *Cougar: ecology & conservation*. University of Chicago Press, Chicago.

## WEBSITES WORTH VISITING

**Cougar Rewilding Foundation's blog, "Cougar News:"** Visit our blog frequently, or use RSS feed, for the latest news on cougars in the Midwest and East, Florida panther issues, and information on how people out West co-exist with cougars. Most are news reports--many prefaced with our comments, but some are original essays. The most recent are on our Home page; older items are classified by state/province and other subjects that you access by clicking "Cougar News" in the left column. <http://www.easterncougar.org/>

**Coyotes, Wolves, Cougars...forever!** Every day blogger Rick Meril adds more articles to this blogspot. Of interest to all who want to preserve and restore large carnivores and wildness. <http://coyotes-wolves-cougars.blogspot.com/>

**Celebrating the American Lion:** Keep updated on the activities of 35 participating cougar advocacy organizations across the United States, including CRF, the only group advocating restoration of cougars to parts of their former range North America. <http://americaslion.org/>

**The Mountain Lion Foundation:** The MLF's website has been completely renovated. You'll find many news items, including state pages with overviews of the status of cougars and collections of documents relating to their management, well researched special reports, information on how livestock owners can protect their animals, and free downloads of publications such as Kevin Hansen's COUGAR: THE AMERICAN LION and the proceedings of all nine mountain lion workshops. <http://www.mountainlion.org/>

**Beartracker's Animal Tracks Den:** Kim A. Cabrera's wonderful site for identifying animal tracks. Almost all the tracks submitted to the CRF as potential cougar tracks are either dog tracks or small bear tracks. Here is the link to the section on how to distinguish dog tracks from cat tracks. (No, it's not because cat tracks are round!) <http://www.beartracker.com/caninevsfeline.html>

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affecting the recovery of cougars in central and eastern North America.