



## RECREATION INFORMATION

### Olympic National Forest

<http://www.fs.fed.us/r6/olympic>

# Cougar Country

**Mountain lion, Puma or Panther**

*Felis concolor* - "cat of one color"



#### Recommended Season

SPRING SUMMER FALL WINTER



Cougars are common to the Olympic Peninsula. They are widespread in the Olympic National Park and also exist in the Olympic National Forest, primarily in the rugged mountain terrain of the Forest's five Wildernesses. Cougars are large, elusive and solitary animals. These native cats of North America can weigh up to 150 pounds and be over eight feet in length including nearly three feet of tail. An adult cougar's front paw track is about 3.5 inches across, with the rear paw track slightly smaller. Cougars are seldom seen. Like any wild animal, they can be dangerous. Attacks on humans are rare, but can and have occurred in the Olympics. To most visitors, glimpsing a cougar in the wild is thrilling. Though your chances of ever seeing a cougar are very limited, the following suggestions can increase your chances of a safe encounter:

- Be alert to your surroundings. While hiking a trail or sitting in camp be alert and look around the surrounding area.
- Always keep children close to you and in sight.
- If you encounter a dead animal such as a deer, leave immediately. Odors from dead animals attract cougars and it could even be a cougar kill.
- Maintain a clean camp. Food odors may attract cougars to your camp.
- Leave pets at home (Pets are prohibited in the National Park).
- Never attempt to get close to a cougar and never turn your back on one or take your eyes off it.
- If a cougar approaches you, do the following:
  - Remain standing but DO NOT run. Running can trigger an attack.
  - Face it and do not take your eyes off of it.
  - Appear large by waving arms, jacket or hat over your head.
  - Shout directly and loudly at the cougar, and if need be, throw things at it such as sticks, rocks, pots and pans, or clothing. Some hikers prefer to carry a walking staff, an ice axe or poles that can be used to chase off a cougar.

