

**MOUNTAIN LION MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES
FOR
LION DAU L-25
GAME MANAGEMENT UNITS
74, 741, 75, 751, 77, 771, & 78**

Prepared for:
Colorado Division of Wildlife
West Region

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DESCRIPTION OF MANAGEMENT AREA AND HABITAT

This DAU is in the southwestern part of Colorado, and includes all of La Plata, San Juan, and Archuleta Counties and parts of Mineral and Hinsdale Counties. This DAU has the 9th highest lion harvest in the state (4% of the total), the 3rd highest game damage payments (8% of total), and had 12 human-lion conflict reports in 1997. This DAU contains significant area of the Southern Ute Indian Reservation. At times in the past, they have conducted lion hunts, but have not done so for several years.

Mountain lions are primarily an opportunistic carnivore, meaning they will eat a variety of animal matter depending on availability and season of year. Seasonally, they will catch and kill a variety of wildlife species, including big game, small game, and non-game animals. Mountain lions are classified as a big game animal, and their populations are primarily managed through sport harvest and natural self-regulation. Mountain lions do have impacts on other wildlife species populations, but control of another wildlife species population has not been documented scientifically, rather, mountain lions are one of many factors that may slow the recovery of small populations or accelerate the decline of small populations. Specific targeted control of mountain lion populations may be warranted in special situations.

TOTAL LION HARVEST OBJECTIVE: This DAU has averaged 13 lions harvested per year, 1988-1998, with a range of 3-23. The proportion of females in the harvest has ranged from 17-47%, and averaged 39%. Sport harvest has accounted for 81% of the harvest, while non-sport harvest has ranged from 1-6 per year. The objective total harvest for this DAU should be a maximum of 18 for a 3-year average. The quota in 2000 is 24.

TOTAL LION DAMAGE OBJECTIVE: Damage payments in this DAU have averaged \$5,436 per year, FY87-88 to FY98-99. Damage payments have been significantly lower except for FY92-93 and FY96-97 when payments over \$10,000 were made "exotic domestic stock" and sheep losses, respectively. This DAU should be managed to keep damage payments below \$7,000 per year for a 3-year average. When that number is reached, an investigator/adjuster could be hired to verify claims.

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