



Puma

Puma concolor



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Photo by: Steve Winter/National Geographic



PUMAS – ALSO KNOWN AS COUGARS, MOUNTAIN LIONS, PANTHERS, AND CATAMOUNTS – SPAN 28 COUNTRIES IN THE AMERICAS, BUT THE SPECIES IS CONSIDERED TO BE DECLINING OVERALL.

PUMA CONSERVATION STATUS

Least Concern	Near Threatened	Vulnerable	Endangered	Critically Endangered
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● **CURRENT** Cougar Range
 ● **HISTORIC** Cougar Range

Habitat

28

PUMAS INHABIT EVERY FOREST TYPE ACROSS THEIR RANGE, AS WELL AS MONTANE DESERTS AND OPEN STEPPE GRASSLANDS

PUMAS INHABIT 28 COUNTRIES ACROSS THE AMERICAS

POPULATION

The puma has the largest geographic range of any native terrestrial mammal in the Western Hemisphere, from southern Alaska down to the southern tip of Chile.

Pumas were eliminated from the entire eastern half of North America, except for a tiny population in Florida, within 200 years of European colonization. Today, the remnant population in Florida is endangered but recovering.

The puma is listed as a species of “Least Concern” by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List of Threatened Species, but the status of puma populations in Central and South America is largely unknown, and many are suspected to be in decline.

SAVING THE PUMA

Panthera’s Puma Program is creating a new image of pumas as a complex species that is integral to the landscapes and ecosystems of the Americas. Through a mix of multimedia initiatives, video footage of previously-unknown puma behaviors combat old mythology that perpetuates the puma as a solitary, dangerous predator.

In northwest Wyoming, Panthera’s Teton Puma Project is untangling the dual effects of wolf reintroduction and human hunting on the declining puma population and using innovative camera technology to study the secret social lives of pumas.

Panthera is also working on an initiative to mitigate human-puma conflict in the southernmost Chilean Patagonia. The area surrounding Torres del Paine National Park sees both incredible levels of illegal puma poaching and substantial predation on sheep suffered by ranch owners.

In Mexico, Panthera is collaborating with biologists to study the impact of reintroduced Mexican wolves on pumas in the Sierra Madre mountains. The study also includes depredation mitigation with local ranches and educational outreach to encourage coexistence.

Threats to the Puma

- 1 Pumas are increasingly threatened by habitat loss and fragmentation due to human development of land.
- 2 Human-puma conflict, including retaliatory and pre-emptive killing, is a primary threat to pumas and is exacerbated by old mythology perpetuating the fear of pumas.
- 3 In some parts of the Americas, puma prey populations are depleted due to overhunting by humans as well as loss of habitat.
- 4 Legal and illegal hunting, including bounty hunting and poaching, poses a significant threat to pumas throughout their range.