

MOUNTAIN LION CONFLICT AND MORTALITY PATTERNS IN MONTANA, 1990-1998^{TWS}

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Many biological factors can be derived from examinations of mortality records and human-lion conflicts. We look at hunting and non-hunting mountain lion mortality records available at the MFWP Wildlife Laboratory 1971-1998. Reports to the state from the USDA/APHIS Wildlife Services for mountain lion conflicts were examined to determine conflicts between livestock and mountain lions. From July 1989-July 1998 we enumerated all human/livestock conflicts with mountain lions by examining MFWP records, newspaper accounts, and telephone reports. Additionally, carcasses of most mountain lions destroyed by Wildlife Services or MFWP were examined and whenever possible detailed post-mortem examinations were conducted. Trends and seasonal patterns in harvest, non-hunting mortality, and conflict incidents were graphically analyzed. Information on the physical characteristics, reproductive performance and condition indexes were examined in relation to causes of mortality, age of lions, and seasons. Some implications to management are discussed. Poster.