

Mountain Lion



Images courtesy of Alan D. Wilson www.naturespiconline.com

FACT FILE

Length: 105-196 cm

Colour: Tan coat with a black tip on its tail. The young are camouflaged with spots and a ring around their tail, which fade as they mature.

Diet: From small rodents to fully grown deer.

Habitat: High mountains, tropical rainforests, deserts and savannas.

Distribution: From southern Canada to Patagonia in South America.

Number of young: An average of 3 to 4 cubs per litter. The gestation period is 90-96 days.

English Names: Mountain Lion, Puma, Cougar, Panther, Catamount

Scientific Name: *Puma concolor* **Irish Name:** Púma

In the cat world, the different types of cat are divided into two groups. The Mountain Lion is the largest member of the “small cats”, despite being bigger than some of the “big cats”, such as the leopard or cheetah. It can be found in the Americas, from southern Canada to Patagonia in South America.

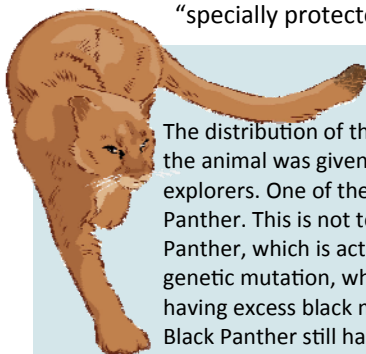
Mountain Lions are tan in colour and are similar in appearance to the African Lion. However, the Mountain Lion has a small head in relation to its body. It is a powerful animal and its large paws help to make it a good climber. Males and females look alike but the males are bigger.

In the wild, the Mountain Lion can live up to 10 years but five years is more likely in areas where hunting is carried out. In captivity it can live longer. Mountain Lions are territorial and occupy a large territory of about 260 sq. km, which they will vigorously defend. They mark their territory by clawing trees and urinating on vegetation.

Mountain Lions are elusive animals. They are most active at twilight and are hard to track down so it is difficult to get an accurate count of their population. They are not a threatened or endangered animal but are a “specially protected species” in some areas.



The Mountain Lion cannot roar but does make an eerie human-like scream when courting.



Panther vs Black Panther

The distribution of the Mountain Lion was once so broad that the animal was given different names by native tribes and explorers. One of the names of the Mountain Lion is the Panther. This is not to be confused with the Black Panther, which is actually a leopard that has a genetic mutation, which results in having excess black melanin. The Black Panther still has the typical leopard spots but they can only be seen close up.

