

**MOUNTAIN LION MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES
FOR
LION DAU L-21
Game Management Units
54, 55, 551, 65, 66, & 67**

Prepared for:
Colorado Division of Wildlife
West Region

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DESCRIPTION OF MANAGEMENT AREA AND HABITAT

DAU L-21 is located in the upper Gunnison River Basin, Lake Fork of the Gunnison, Cimarron Rivers and the east side of the upper Uncompaghre River Valley. It is bounded on the north by US Highway 50, Curecanti Creek, the North Fork of the Gunnison River and Gunnison River divide and the Gunnison-Pitkin County line; on the east by the Continental Divide; on the south by the Continental Divide, the Hinsdale-San Juan County line and the Ouray-San Juan County line; and on the west by the Ouray-San Miguel County line, Colorado Highway 62 and US Highway 550.

A wide variety of habitat types occur within the DAU. The upper Gunnison Basin is a high mountain valley with sagebrush and aspen woodlands being the dominant vegetative types at lower elevations. Lodgepole pine and spruce/fir dominate higher elevations. Pinyon-juniper, sagebrush, oakbrush, and serviceberry dominate the lower elevations in the Cimarron and Uncompaghre River areas. Aspen woodland is found at the intermediate ranges and spruce-fir dominant the higher elevations.

TOTAL MOUNTAIN LION HARVEST OBJECTIVE: The average annual mountain lion sport harvest in the DAU during the past 11 years (1988-1998) was 6. The high harvest of 12 lions occurred in 1996. There have been 8 reported damage harvests in the DAU over the past 11 years.

The harvest quota was 17 in 1996 and 1997 and was increased to 22 for 1998 and 1999. The current quota seems to be meeting the sportsmen's demands without any adverse impacts to the mountain lion population and with no significant increase in the number of damage lion harvests. Therefore, the annual quota should be maintained at 22. The Division of Wildlife will rely on sport hunting as the primary method to control mountain lion populations in the DAU.

MOUNTAIN LION DAMAGE OBJECTIVE: Mountain lion damage claims over the past 12 fiscal years (1987-88 to 1998-99) ranged from \$0 to \$1,499 annually (average \$603). Annual damage claims should be held below \$2,000 with the most effective control being the harvest of individual offending animals.

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HUMAN/MOUNTAIN LION CONFLICT COMPLAINTS: Human/lion conflicts in the DAU have remained low. Lions that exhibit aggressive behavior or show lack of fear for humans should immediately be removed from the population.

MOUNTAIN LION INTERACTION WITH OTHER WILDLIFE SPECIES: It is well documented that mountain lions prey on mule deer and elk. It is not known what effect lions are having on deer and elk in the Gunnison Basin at this time. Sport hunting will be used to harvest mountain lions.