

# Mountain Lion Update

Sheriff Jeff Leikauf

LeeAnne Mila –Agricultural Commissioner

10/08/2024



# Mountain Lion Update

- On March 23, 2024, a mountain lion attacked two brothers while antler shed hunting near Georgetown. The younger brother sustained injuries but was able to call 911. The older brother sustained fatal injuries and was pronounced dead at the scene by emergency responders. California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) issued a depredation permit to the County's professional trapper. The trapper was able to locate and euthanize the mountain lion within hours of the incident. Through DNA samples, CDFW was able to confirm that the mountain lion euthanized was the same animal involved in the fatal attack earlier in the day.
- Mountain lion encounters are uncommon in California but do occasionally occur. However, this is the first confirmed fatality from a mountain lion attack in California since 2004. Since the attack, significant numbers of domestic animals have been killed by mountain lions within the County, many occurring in daytime hours, which is not usual. Owners of the animals have contacted CDFW and obtained hazing permits, which the county trapper assisted with utilizing his dogs in many cases. Calls into the County from concerned citizens observing mountain lions lingering on their properties have increased.
- The Sheriff's Office has issued safety tips regarding wildlife encounters, reminding residents to stay alert and what to do if encountering a mountain lion.

# Mountain Lion Update

- In California, mountain lions are a specially protected non-game species; following the passage of the California Wildlife Protection Act of 1990 (Proposition 117). Mountain lions have not been hunted in California since 1972.
- In 2020, CDFW implemented a policy of two strikes on a parcel within 11 days policy.

# LION REPRODUCTION AND DISPERSAL

- Lions may have between 1 and 6 kittens with an average of 2 to 3 kittens per breeding attempt.
- Lions breed year-round but females typically have kittens every other year
- Juveniles stay with mom and disperse after 12 to 15 months
- Overall reproductive success is related to hunting success.



## Memorandum

Date: July 10, 2020

To: Regional Managers  
Department of Fish and Wildlife

From: Stafford Lehr, Deputy Director  
Wildlife and Fisheries Division  
David Bess, Chief  
Law Enforcement Division



Subject: Statewide Mountain Lion Depredation Approach

Given evolving scientific knowledge and recent events involving mountain lions in California, the CDFW took a fresh look at how depredation permits are being administered statewide. Since 2017 our approach has been deliberative, starting with the 3-Step Policy being implemented in the Santa Monica Mountains and Santa Ana Mountains. In March 2020, the 3-Step policy was expanded to the larger proposed ESU contained in the Petition to list mountain lions under CESA. The proposed ESU encompasses an area stretching from San Francisco in the north to the Mexico border the south and from I-5/I-15 in the east to the coast. Also, during this recent timeframe, we have taken a close look at California Fish and Game Code Section 4801.5, which generally requires that non-lethal measures be used when taking mountain lions, and determined that it requires CDFW to implement an approach based on the code to depredation permits statewide. Therefore, we are giving the following direction for all depredation permits for mountain lions outside the boundaries of the proposed ESU:

1. Upon request from a property owner that has suffered livestock loss, a non-lethal Step 1 permit—consistent with Fish and Game Code section 4801.5—shall be issued that authorizes some element(s) of non-lethal take (e.g., pursuit, catch or capture or the attempt to pursue, catch or capture) along with protective enclosures or actions to protect their livestock<sup>1</sup>. Examples of non-lethal Step 1 take measures include:
  - a. Pursuit with ATV or other type of motorized vehicle
  - b. Pursuit with dogs
  - c. Use of non-lethal ammunition (rubber bullets, cracker shells, bean bag rounds)
2. Should the property owner suffer a second loss and have implemented the non-lethal take measures authorized, the Regional Manager should analyze and determine whether additional non-lethal take measures and recommendations should be pursued, and, if so, issue a second non-lethal permit. If not, and the Regional Manager documents why a second non-lethal permit is not feasible, then the Regional Manager has the discretion to

<sup>1</sup> Reporting parties should be provided with educational materials on preventive measures that they can undertake to minimize their chances of losing livestock to depredation.

### Issues:

- Lengthy process
- Non-Responsive
- Changing Requirements
- Differing responses
- Response Area

Year	Non-Lethal	Lethal
2017	1	11
2018	0	17
2019	0	9
2020	14	17
2021	25	5
2022	35	4
2023	50	13
*2024	20	4

\*Jan 1 – June 30 2024



# California Fish and Game Code

## 4800.

- (a) The mountain lion (genus Puma) is a specially protected mammal under the laws of this state.
- (b) It is unlawful to take, injure, possess, transport, import, or sell a mountain lion or a product of a mountain lion, except as specifically provided in this chapter or in Chapter 2 (commencing with Section 2116) of Division 3.

## 4801.

The department may remove or take any mountain lion, or authorize an appropriate local agency with public safety responsibility to remove or take any mountain lion, that is perceived to be an imminent threat to public health or safety or that is perceived by the department to be an imminent threat to the survival of any threatened, endangered, candidate, or fully protected sheep species.

*(Amended by Stats. 1999, Ch. 435, Sec. 1. Effective September 17, 1999. Note: This section was added on June 5, 1990, by initiative Prop. 117.)*

# California Fish and Game Code

## 4802.

Any person, or the employee or agent of a person, whose livestock or other property is being or has been injured, damaged, or destroyed by a mountain lion may report that fact to the department and request a permit to take the mountain lion.

## 4803.

Upon receipt of a report pursuant to Section 4802, the department, or any animal damage control officer specifically authorized by the department to carry out this responsibility, shall immediately take the action necessary to confirm that there has been depredation by a mountain lion as reported. The confirmation process shall be completed as quickly as possible, but in no event more than 48 hours after receiving the report. If satisfied that there has been depredation by a mountain lion as reported, the department shall promptly issue a permit to take the depredating mountain lion.

# California Fish and Game Code

## 4801.5.

(a) Unless authorized in this chapter, **nonlethal procedures** shall be used when removing or taking any mountain lion that has not been designated as an imminent threat to public health or safety.

(b) For purposes of this chapter, “imminent threat to public health or safety” means a situation where a mountain lion exhibits one or more aggressive behaviors directed toward a person that is not reasonably believed to be due to the presence of responders.

(c) For purposes of this chapter, “nonlethal procedures” means procedures that may include, but are not limited to, capturing, pursuing, anesthetizing, temporarily possessing, temporarily injuring, marking, attaching to or surgically implanting monitoring or recognition devices, providing veterinary care, transporting, hazing, rehabilitating, releasing, or taking no action.

(d) The department may, as the department determines is necessary to protect mountain lions or the public, authorize qualified individuals, educational institutions, governmental agencies, or nongovernmental organizations to implement nonlethal procedures on a mountain lion in accordance with subdivision (a).

## 86.

“Take” means hunt, pursue, catch, capture, or kill, or attempt to hunt, pursue, catch, capture, or kill.

*(Enacted by Stats. 1957, Ch. 456.)*



# California Fish and Game Code

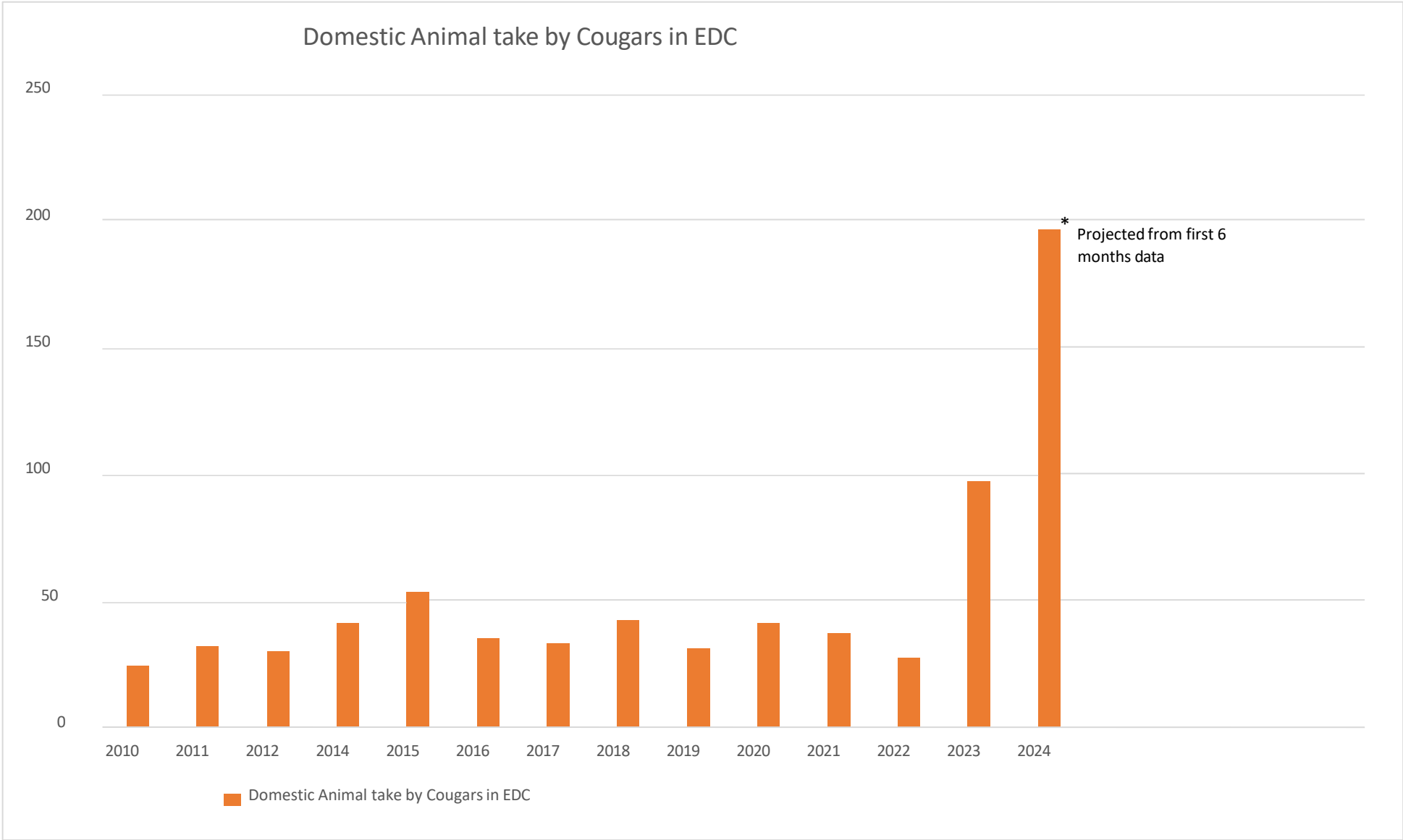
## 4807.

(a) Any mountain lion that is encountered while in the act of pursuing, inflicting injury to, or killing livestock, or domestic animals, may be taken immediately by the owner of the property or the owner's employee or agent. The taking shall be reported within 72 hours to the department. The department shall investigate the depredation, and, if the mountain lion was captured, injured, or killed, the mountain lion or the entire carcass of the mountain lion which has been recovered shall be turned over to the department. Upon satisfactorily completing the investigation and receiving the mountain lion or the carcass, if recovered, the department shall issue a permit confirming that the requirements of this section have been met with respect to the particular mountain lion taken under these circumstances.

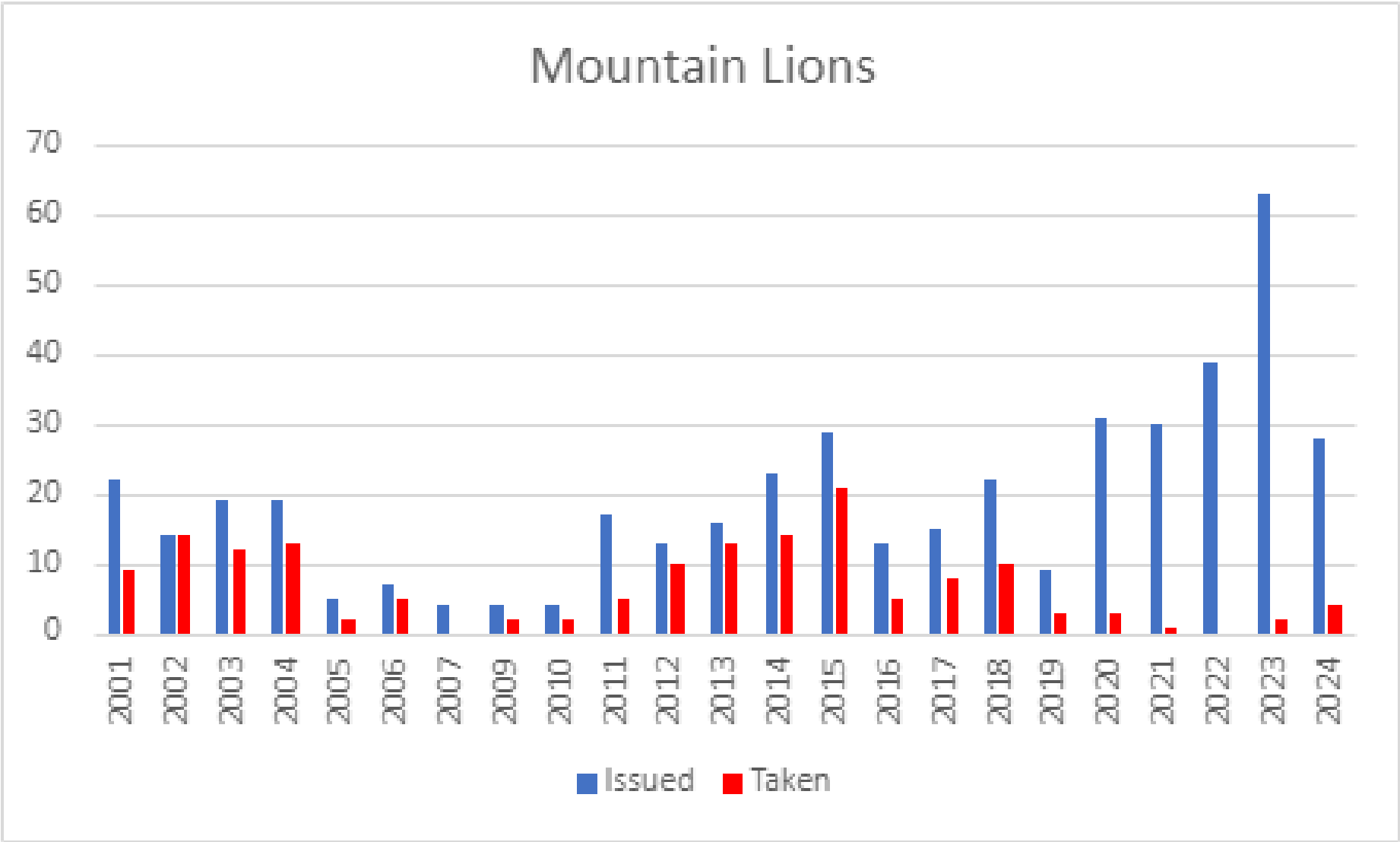
(b) The department shall undertake a complete necropsy on any returned mountain lion carcass and report the findings to the commission. The commission shall compile the reported findings and prepare an annual written report that shall be submitted to the Legislature not later than the January 15 next following the year in which the mountain lion was taken.

# Why are lion depredations spiking in 2023 and 2024?

Figure 1.



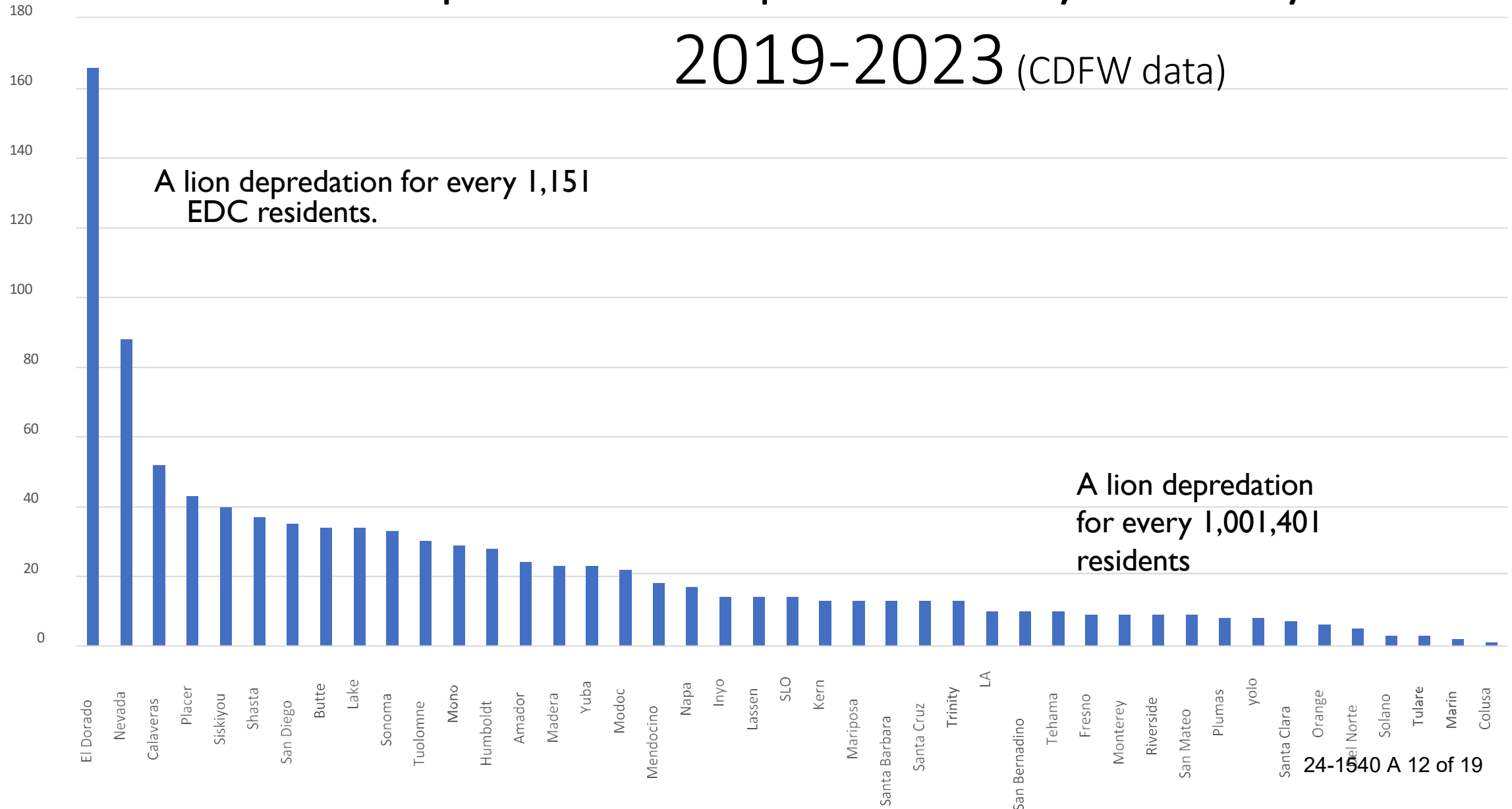
Mountain Lion Depredation Permits and Takes 2001 -2024



\* CDFW Data

# Total Lion Depredation permits by county

## 2019-2023 (CDFW data)



# Mountain Lion Depredation By Year Since 2010

Year	Goats	Sheep	Cattle	Alpaca	Llama	Horse foal	Horse Adult	Donkey	Fowl	Emu	Pets	Human
2010	19	4	1									
2011	22	8		1		1						
2012	19	6	1						3		3	
2013												
2014	26	13									2	
2015	29	17	1	3	1				2			
2016	30	4					1					
2017	25	8										
2018	27	13	1						1			
2019	28	3									2	
2020	34	5		1	1							
2021	25	11									1	
2022	20	6		1								
2023	41	39		4	8		3			2		
*2024	91	63		1			2	6	7		6	1

\* January 1 – Sept 25, 2024

# Reporting



## How To Report a Mountain Lion Problem in El Dorado County

1. **Immediate Threat = 911**

*Take measures to protect yourself, your family, pets and livestock if you are at immediate risk or under attack.*

2. **Injured/Dead Livestock or Pets = (530) 621-5520  
(El Dorado County Agriculture Department)**

*Non-Emergency Help / Lion Has Left the Area.*

3. **Sightings = Post to Facebook**

*El Dorado County Mountain Lion Sightings*




[www.theoutdoorview.org](http://www.theoutdoorview.org)





# Facebook Mountain Lion Sightings

Facebook interface showing a group page titled "EL DORADO COUNTY Mountain Lion Sightings". The browser address bar displays the URL: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/968162487780043>. The browser tabs include CalPeats, Bookmarks, Bob Sutton, StartPage Search En..., County of El Dorad..., CDFA Notification S..., pi.cdfa.ca.gov/pqm..., and UC Weed Science -... The Facebook search bar is visible with the text "Search Facebook". The main image shows a mountain lion walking through tall grass in a wooded area. Below the image, the group name "EL DORADO COUNTY Mountain Lion Sightings" is displayed, along with the description "Public group · 7.9K members". A row of member profile pictures is shown, followed by buttons for "+ Invite", "Share", "Joined", and a dropdown menu. The bottom right corner shows the text "24-1540 A 15 of 19" and a settings icon.



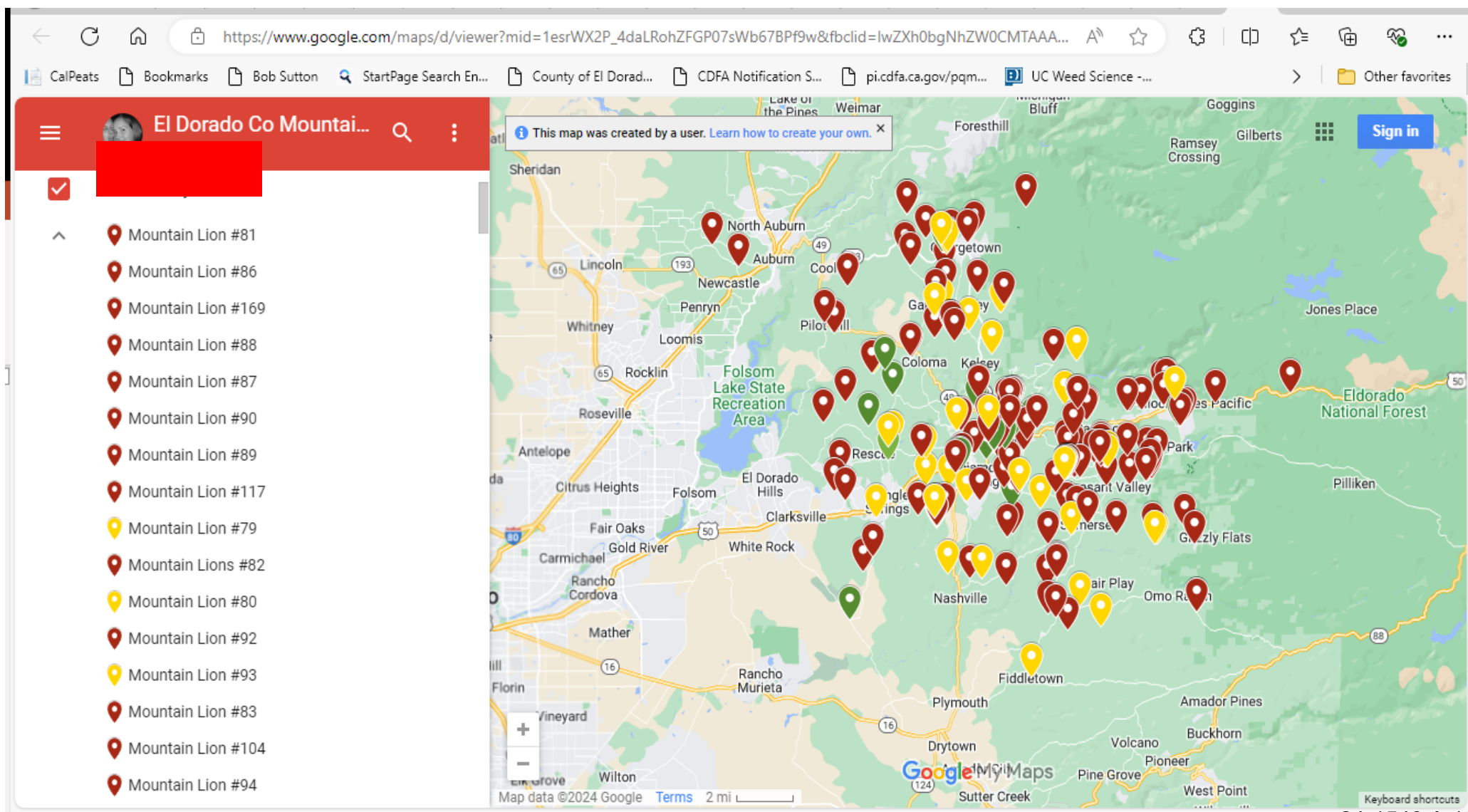
**EL DORADO COUNTY Mountain Lion Sightings**

Public group · 7.9K members

+ Invite Share Joined

24-1540 A 15 of 19

# Mountain Lion Sightings



# Next Steps

- Letter to CDFW Outlining Crisis and Needs
  - Permit Streamline Process
  - Consistency
  - Timeliness – Permits need to be issued quickly
  - El Dorado County is Different - A Policy for El Dorado County Specifically
    - Depredation permits issued if conditions are met
      - Protective Measures in Place
      - Verification by Staff – Mountain Lion
      - Area not Property
  - Proactive Hazing Permits if Deemed Possible by Trapper/Houndsman

# EL DORADO COUNTY FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION RECOMMENDATIONS

- The county should appeal to the CDFW to increase and restore the staffing for conflict biologists assigned to the county.
- EDC should combine its voice with other high lion conflict counties to seek changes in CDFW policies on lions.
- EDC in partnership with CDFW should take active measures to end deer feeding by residents on the west slope through both education and law enforcement.
- Investment is needed in research of conflict avoidance measures for high conflict counties. A research program like that being conducted in Washington State using hounds for a “tree and free” hazing program would be useful.
- A zonal program of lion management in California that considers the spikes in conflict now occurring should be implemented, suspending the three strikes rule in high conflict counties.



# Questions?

