



Puma

Puma concolor

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Photo by: Mark Elbroch/Panthera

Pumas – also known as cougars, mountain lions, panthers and catamounts – span 23 countries in the Americas, but the species is considered to be declining overall.



● **CURRENT**
Cougar Range

● **HISTORIC**
Cougar Range

Threats to the Puma

- 1 The primary threat to pumas is habitat loss and fragmentation due to human development.
- 2 Human-puma conflict, including retaliatory and pre-emptive killing, is also a 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, continue to limit or threaten pumas throughout their range.
- 5 Disease and trade in wildlife parts are emerging issues for the species.

PUMA CONSERVATION STATUS

Least Concern Near Threatened Vulnerable Endangered Critically Endangered



Habitat

Pumas inhabit every forest type across their range, as well as montane deserts and open steppe grasslands.

23

Pumas inhabit 23 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.

Within 200 years of European colonization, pumas were eliminated from the entire eastern half of North America, except for a tiny population in Florida.

The puma was listed as a species of “least concern” in 2015 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

Pumas are a wide-ranging species at low risk of extinction, although many local populations face threats to their persistence.

Panthera’s Puma Program emphasizes five categories of work:

1. Protecting and enhancing connectivity among puma populations, to ensure their genetic diversity and health;
2. Understanding and improving social tolerance to improve human perceptions of pumas;
3. Strengthening policy to impact puma conservation at larger scales and enhance coexistence strategies both regionally and globally;
4. Capacity building to develop tools that conservation practitioners can utilize to conserve pumas and other wild felids into the future, and to elevate local communities, indigenous peoples, and the next generation of cat conservation practitioners to ensure our impact is sustainable beyond our own lifetimes.
5. Reintroductions and rewilding, to support puma range expansion into regions where they were extirpated.