



P-22

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business development. NPS team members set up remote cameras and the open traps that safely capture the cats. Once anesthetized, they are examined by biologists who take blood samples, check their teeth, etc. then attach a GPS tracking collar before being released back into the wild.

The data transmitted by the collars has allowed the NPS to accurately monitor the animals and project their next movements. Scientists are now tracking 11 mountain lions in the region. You can check out a map indicating the general location of the 11 mountain lions currently being followed at <http://1.usa.gov/1LOIHsf>.

The NPS and the National Wildlife Federation (NWF) are using the gathered information to develop management plans that protect landscapes critical to wildlife. The long-term survival of wildcats is affected by a variety of urban threats such as the 405 and 101 Freeways, which bisect the home range of the mountain lions, thus creating a smaller area in which to find food and suitable mates. Also cats are at risk for rodenticide as homeowners put out rat poison to protect their property, the dead rats are often ingested by coyotes who are then eaten by mountain lions. Some early photos taken of P-22 showed that he was suffering from mange which he probably picked up from eating a diseased animal.

Beth Pratt, the California director of NWF and noted national environmental leader, was so captivated by P-22's story she has written a chapter about him in her upcoming book, *WHEN MOUNTAIN LIONS ARE NEIGHBORS: WILDLIFE IN TODAY'S CALIFORNIA*, which will be released in Fall 2015.

In the chapter called "A Mountain Lion in Hollywoodland," Pratt describes the painstaking efforts taken by NWF and the NPS to protect the future of these magnificent animals in our state. Here is an excerpt where she introduces the new cat in town.

"A relative youngster, P-22 - as he will soon be

known to the world - heads east toward the city at age two, probably starting roughly twenty miles away in Topanga State Park in the Santa Monica Mountains. His leaving home, called 'dispersal' by biologists, marks a typical milestone for a cougar at his age, as young males must seek out their own territory. The Santa Monica Mountains house plenty of deer to eat, but those deer can come with a high price if located in the established home range of another male. Cougars can fight to the death over territory and a teenager like P-22 knows he is no match for an older, more experienced cat.

Finding unclaimed space that includes a deer herd within a wilderness squeezed on all sides by a megalopolis can prove to be challenging. P-22, however, fully utilizing the stealth that he has inherited from his ancestors over millions of years, creeps quite improbably unnoticed through the neighborhoods of Bel Air and Beverly Hills, his paws perhaps leaving impressions on the impeccably manicured lawns..."

"...Given the elusive nature of cougars, the obvious question becomes why did a cat known for its embrace of solitude chart a course into the most crowded area in the United States?... Certainly there are easier ways to secure deer than to march into the middle of Los Angeles... A quick glance at his route on a map shows he had to be a bit mad to even attempt his journey. P-22 wanted to see beyond where the known cougar world ended, no matter what the cost..."

One major initiative designed to support the continued existence of the mountain lion population in Los Angeles is the planned Wildlife Crossing Bridge over the 101 Freeway, which Pratt says is supported across the board by local residents, governments and wildlife researchers. NWF created the #SaveLACougars in partnership with the Santa Monica Mountains Fund to advocate for the building of the crossing.

KTLA reporter Gayle Anderson recently reported that, thanks to the efforts of a dedicated coalition of groups and individuals, including National Park Service, CalTrans,

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