

A STUDY OF MOUNTAIN LIONS INADVERTENTLY CAPTURED IN FOOTHOLD TRAPS



Project History

- In late 2014, Department became aware of a research project, partially funded by the Department, in which a relatively high proportion of marked mountain lions had been inadvertently caught in foothold traps
 - Foothold captures not a primary research design

Project History

- Department knowledge of study results largely corresponded with the initiation of a lawsuit against the Department regarding trapping regulation.
- Incumbent upon the Department to gather information about potential threats to species.
- Included a proposed study in the first draft of the FY2016 Predator Management Plan to initiate our investigation into the effects of capture within a foothold trap. PROJECT 36.

Project History

□ Goals

- Understand how incidental captures of mountain lions in foothold traps affect their survival rates.
- Determine if trap type, size, or set type influence mountain lion capture rates.
- Establish a decision matrix for release of incidentally captured mountain lions.

Project History

- Project development during the legislative session in which the statutory direction on lethal removal through predator fee (80%) was adopted (AB 78).
- Wildlife Damage Management Committee and Commission expressed need to focus on higher priority projects based on their understanding of the legislative direction during development and adoption.

Project History

- Department chose to remove “Project 36: Determining Fate of Incidentally Captured Mountain Lions” from the FY 2016 Predator Management Plan, but chose to fund with revenues generated through Pittman-Robertson Federal Aid Grant and sportsmen’s revenues.

Project History

- Manuscript regarding initial work is currently *In Press* with a scientific journal.
- Department employees questioned during depositions in early 2018 about knowledge and response to information contained in research publication.

Project History

- Substantial confusion regarding Department intent
 - Cannot ignore existing research
 - Provided review of manuscript, noted substantial initial shortcomings
 - Need objective, relevant information
- Project description to follow

Project Description

- Main goals
 - ▣ Survival with larger sample size
 - ▣ What traps and sets minimize injury
 - ▣ What signs and symptoms can field personnel use
- Potential goals
 - ▣ Mountain lion movements
 - ▣ Mountain lion prey selection
 - ▣ Healed injuries over time

Project Summary

- Three main entry points
 - Mountain lion caught and euthanized at trap
 - Mountain lion caught and released with no collar
 - Mountain lion caught, collared, and released

Project Summary

- 2016-2017
 - 4 animals collared
 - 10 pictures of trap and sets
- 2017-2018
 - 5 animals collared
 - 8 pictures of trap and sets

Questions

