



Cat of Many Names

Mountain lions used to live in most of the western hemisphere, from mountains of Canada to the southern tip of South America. In different places, mountain lions have different names. It is called cougar, puma, panther, catamount, and painter.

There are lots of mountain lions in Colorado, but they are rarely seen. They are secretive and avoid people. They mostly hunt at night, moving like phantoms while they stalk their favorite prey, mule deer.

Since a lion cannot outrun a deer over long distances, it must get as close as possible to its prey before pouncing. Then, the lion leaps onto the deer's back and usually breaks the deer's neck with its strong jaws and paws. Like many other feline predators, the mountain lion will usually drag its kill to a private spot to feed. A lion can eat as much as thirty pounds of meat at a time, but usually does not eat the entire carcass. Once it has eaten its fill, the lion will cover the remains with leaves and twigs. It will come back to feed when it is hungry again.

