

Cougar sightings near Redmond prompt safety reminder

by Bend_Weekly_News_Sources

Cougars have been sighted three times in the Dry Canyon area of Redmond over the last three weeks, authorities said, prompting safety reminders for residents who live in or near "cougar country".

In a news release issued recently by Redmond Police Captain Brian McNaughton, he encouraged residents or visitors to the area to refer to the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) web site for safety tips, and passed along the following ODFW data:

"Report any cougar sighting or encounter to the local ODFW office at 388-6363; the Oregon State Police at 388-6213; or if in Redmond, the Redmond Police Department at 693-6911," McNaughton said.

Living in Cougar Country:

Learn the neighborhood. Be aware of any wildlife corridors or places where deer or elk concentrate.

Walk pets during the day and keep them on a leash.

Keep pets indoors at dawn and dusk. Shelter them for the night.

Feed pets indoors.

Don't leave food or garbage outside.

Use animal proof garbage cans.

Remove heavy brush from near the house and any play areas.

Install motion-activated lights outdoors and along walkways and driveways.

Be more cautious at dawn and dusk when cougars are more active.

Do not feed any wildlife. By attracting other wildlife, you may attract a cougar.

Keep areas around bird feeders clean.

Deer-proof your garden and yard with nets, lights and fencing.

Fence and shelter livestock. Move them to sheds or barns at night.

Encountering a cougar:

Cougars often will retreat if given the opportunity. Always leave the animal a way to escape.

Stay calm and stand your ground.

Maintain direct eye contact.

Pick up any children, but do so without bending down or turning your back on the cougar.

Back away slowly.

Do not run. Running triggers a response in cougars which could lead to an attack.

Raise your voice and speak firmly.

If the cougar seems aggressive, raise your arms to make yourself look larger and clap your hands.

If in the very unusual event that a cougar attacks you, fight back with rocks, sticks, garden tools or any other items available.

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