

Memorandum

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Date: January 22, 2018

To: Valerie Termini
Executive Director
Fish and Game Commission

From: Charlton H. Bonham
Director



Subject: **Mountain Lion Necropsy Report for 2017**

Please find the attached report on mountain lion necropsies performed by the Department during 2017. This report was compiled by Department staff to comply with Section 4807 of the Fish and Game Code.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact Kari Lewis, Chief, Wildlife Branch, at (916) 445-3789.

Attachment

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**State of California
NATURAL RESOURCES AGENCY
Department of Fish and Wildlife**

**Report to the Fish and Game Commission
Regarding Findings of Necropsies on Mountain Lions
Taken Under Depredation Permits in 2017**

Submitted in compliance with Section 4807 of the Fish and Game Code

Summary

According to California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) records at the time of this report, the Department issued 193 mountain lion depredation permits in calendar year 2017 and 80 mountain lions were reported as being taken. CDFW staff issued the greatest numbers of permits in September, October, and November (Figure 1). The reasons for property owners obtaining mountain lion depredation permits varied; however, sheep accounted for the majority of the total reported incidents (39%) followed by goats (31%) (Figure 2).

Although only 80 mountain lions were reported as being taken in 2017, CDFW staff necropsied 82 carcasses and 7 necropsies are still pending at the time of this report. Sixty-eight percent of depredating mountain lions necropsied to date were male and 32% were female (Table 1). Sixty-seven percent of mountain lions necropsied to date were aged as adults (24 months or older); 25% were sub-adults (13-24 months of age); 7% were juveniles (12 months or younger), and one mountain lion age was not recorded (1%; Table 2).

The majority of depredation mountain lion carcasses came from CDFW's North-Central Region (33%; Table 3).

The majority of necropsied mountain lion stomach contents contained hoofstock such as goat (22%) or sheep (17%); however, various other contents were observed as well (Figure 3).

Note: This year, CDFW initiated phase 1 of a new electronic reporting system, the Wildlife Incident Report (WIR). Once all phases are completed, the WIR system will centralize all wildlife incidents and investigations - including mountain lion depredations, which were historically completed via paper records. Phase 1 of the transition from the paper system to the electronic WIR began in May 2017, however there are some inconsistencies in the new reporting system that have been uncovered during data analysis for this report. These problems are being resolved and will be addressed during phase 2 of the WIR rollout.

Figure 1. Monthly summary of mountain lion depredation reports for 2017. Includes the number of depredation permits issued each month and the number of mountain lions taken. In March, the number of lions taken on a depredation permit appears to exceed the number of permits issued. This is believed to be due to the system transition from paper permits to the WIR and is currently being investigated.

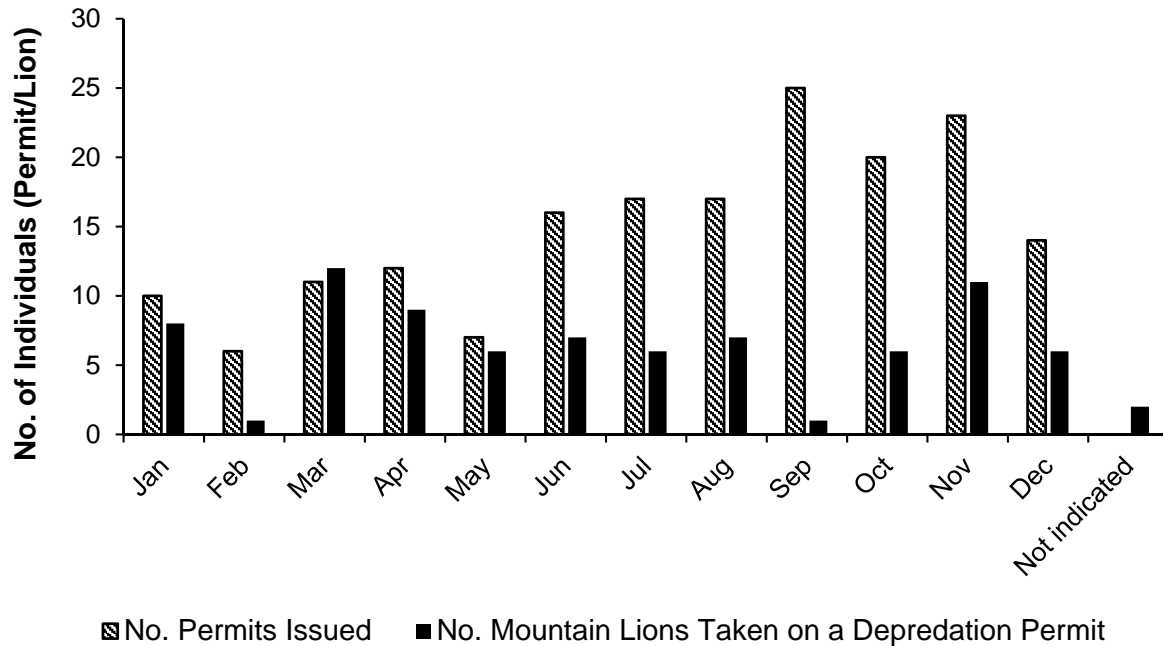


Figure 2. Number of depredation permits issued in 2017 and the type of property damage reported (ie. animal(s) reported to have been taken by a mountain lion). These numbers are based upon the number of incidents and not the total number of animals claimed to have been taken in a single incident.

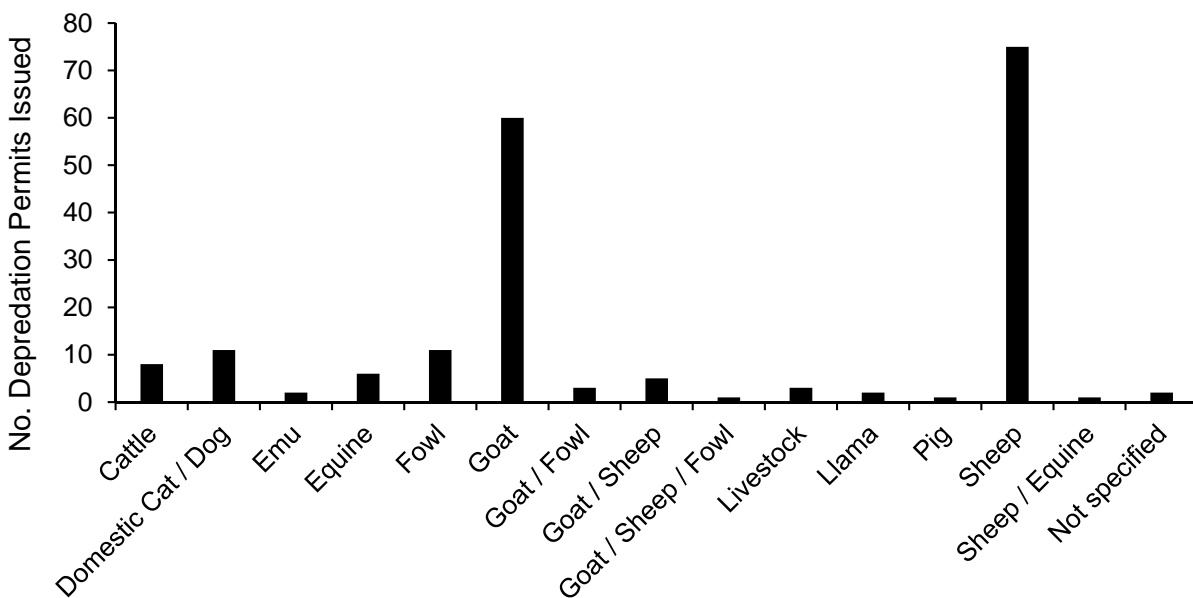


Table 1. Sex of depredating mountain lions necropsied by CDFW in 2017.

Sex	Total by Sex
Male	56
Female	26

Table 2. Ages of depredating mountain lions necropsied by the WIL in 2017.

Age Class	Total by Age Class
Juvenile ¹	6
Sub Adult ²	20
Adult ³	55
Not indicated	1

¹ Juvenile: 12 months or younger

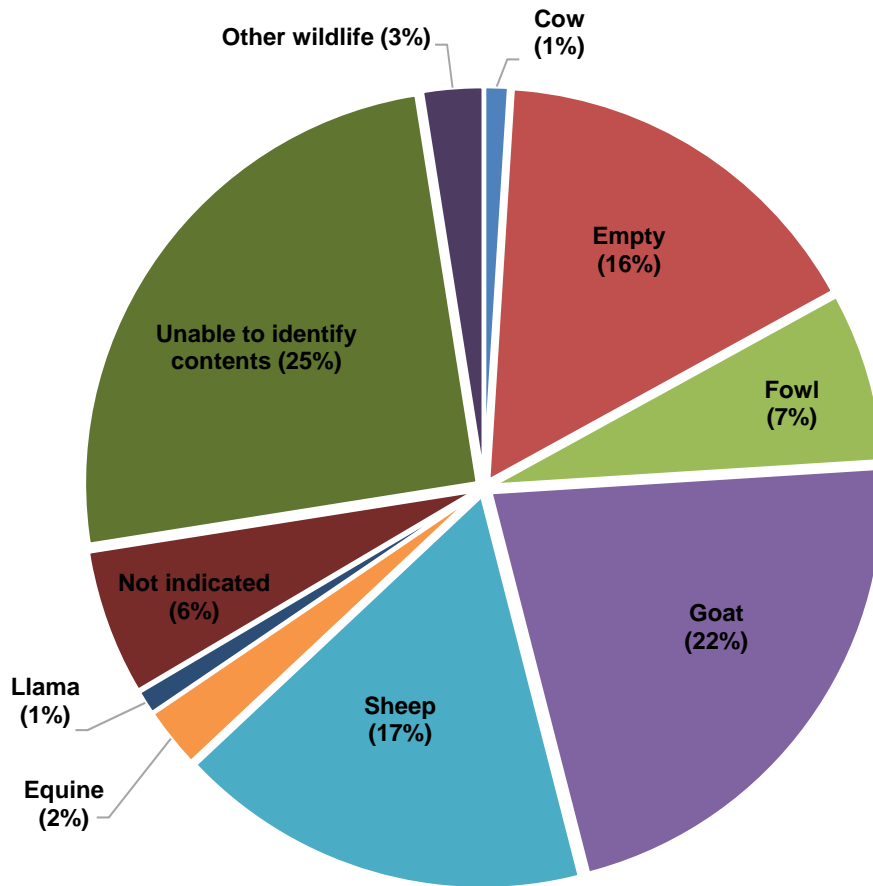
² Sub Adult: 13-23 months

³ Adult: 24 months or older

Table 3. Geographic distribution of depredating mountain lions necropsied by CDFW in 2017.

CDFW Region	Total by Region
Northern	19
North Central	27
Bay Delta	12
Central	17
South Coast	5
Inland Desert	2

Figure 3. Stomach contents of depredating mountain lions necropsied by CDFW in 2017[†].



[†] Note: One lawful method of take for depredating mountain lions is by cage-trapping. Cage traps are typically baited with the remainder of a depredated carcass.