

**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 2018**

**Prepared by the Wildlife Investigations Lab  
Wildlife Branch, Wildlife and Fisheries Division**

**10 January 2019**

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

## **Summary**

Provisional data and records available to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) at the time of this report show the Department issued 334 mountain lion depredation permits in calendar year 2018 and 74 mountain lions were reported as being taken. CDFW staff issued the greatest numbers of permits in April, June, and September (Figure 1). The reasons for property owners obtaining mountain lion depredation permits varied; however, goats accounted for the majority of the total reported incidents (34%) followed by sheep (22%) (Figure 2).

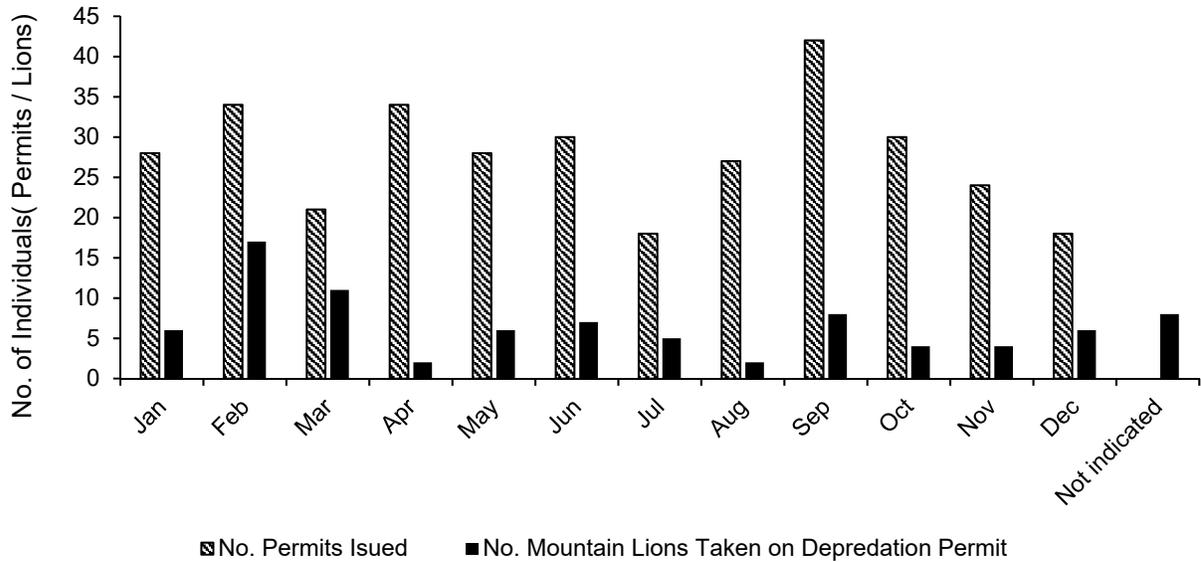
Although 74 mountain lions were reported as being taken in 2018, CDFW staff necropsied 86 carcasses and 4 necropsies are still pending at the time of this report. Sixty-six percent of mountain lions necropsied to date were male and 31% were female; the sex of two lions could not be determined (Table 1). Sixty-four percent of mountain lions necropsied to date were aged as adults (24 months or older); 22% were sub-adults (13-24 months of age); 10.5% were juveniles (12 months or younger); and the ages of three mountain lions were not recorded (3.5%; Table 2).

The majority of depredation mountain lion carcasses came from CDFW's North-Central Region (34%; Table 3).

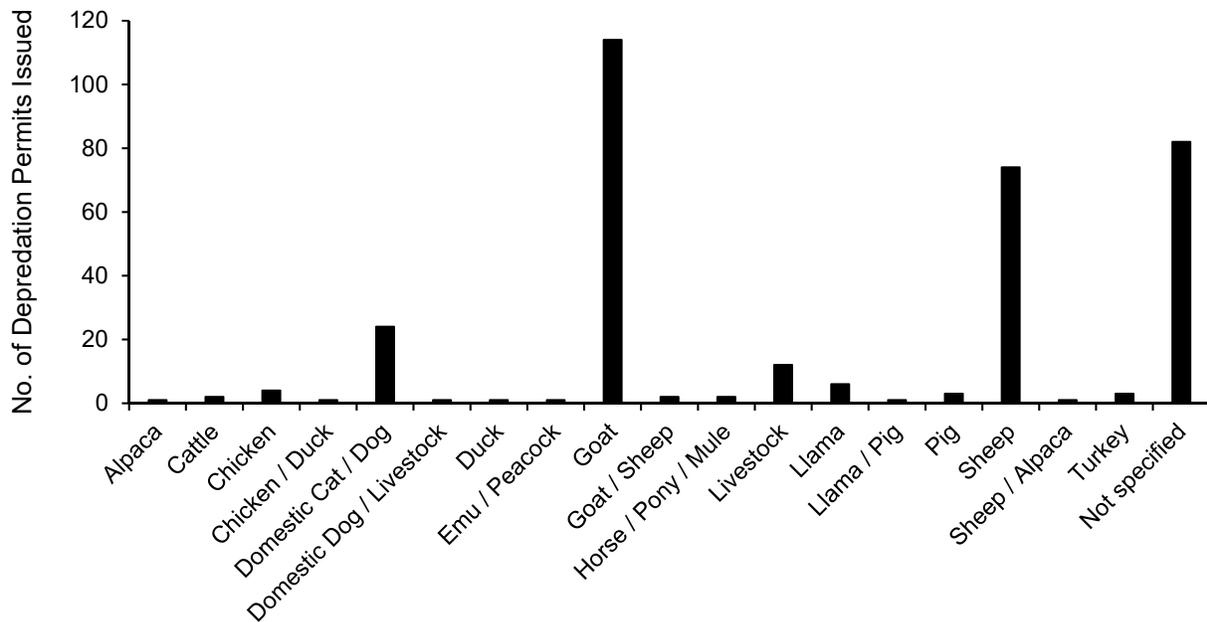
Necropsied mountain lion stomach contents that could be identified most frequently contained hoofstock such as goat (15%) or sheep (8%); however, other contents were observed (Figure 3).

Note: Three factors contributed to a greater number of depredation necropsies recorded than the number of lions reported as taken on depredation by the Department's Wildlife Incident Reporting system (WIR). First, although the WIR (in its second year of implementation) was intended to replace the previous paper permit system, the use of paper permits has not completely ceased. Paper depredation permits must be manually entered into the WIR; otherwise they are not recorded. Second, reporting parties and CDFW staff have reported an inability to close-out WIR depredation incidents and thus report take. Finally, in two separate occurrences, multiple mountain lions were taken on a single depredation permit by the reporting party. The Department is working to address these issues as expeditiously as possible. Procedures have been clarified with department staff and permittees; staff training on use of the WIR system is ongoing; and technical issues are being identified and reported to improve reliability of the system for users and accuracy of reporting.

**Figure 1. Provisional monthly summary of mountain lion depredation reports for 2018. Includes the number of depredation permits issued each month and the number of mountain lions taken.**



**Figure 2. Provisional number of depredation permits issued in 2018 and the type of property damage reported (i.e. 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 depredated mountain lions necropsied by CDFW in 2018 based on provisional data.**

<b>Sex</b>	<b>Total by Sex</b>
Male	57
Female	27
Not indicated	2

**Table 2. Ages of depredated mountain lions necropsied by CDFW in 2018 based on provisional data.**

<b>Age Class</b>	<b>Total by Age Class</b>
Juvenile <sup>1</sup>	9
Sub Adult <sup>2</sup>	19
Adult <sup>3</sup>	55
Not indicated	3

<sup>1</sup> Juvenile: 12 months or younger

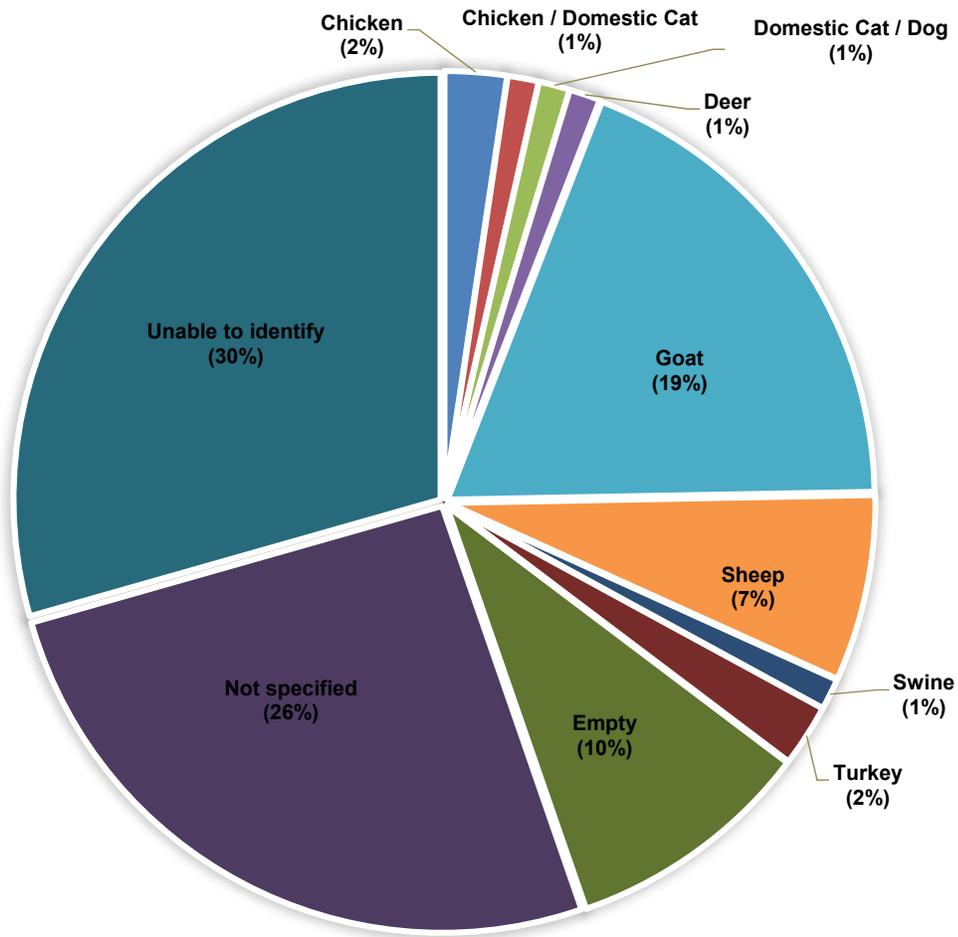
<sup>2</sup> Sub Adult: 13-23 months

<sup>3</sup> Adult: 24 months or older

**Table 3. Geographic distribution of depredated mountain lions necropsied by CDFW in 2018 based on provisional data.**

<b>CDFW Region</b>	<b>Total by Region</b>
Northern	23
North Central	27
Bay Delta	7
Central	18
South Coast	7
Inland Desert	1
Not indicated	3

**Figure 3. Stomach contents of depredating mountain lions necropsied by CDFW in 2018 based on provisional data<sup>†</sup>.**



<sup>†</sup> 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.