State of California - Natural Resources Agency
DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE
Wildlife Branch
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GAVIN NEWSOM, Governor
CHARLTON H. BONHAM, Director

June 12, 2025

Public Notice of Intent to Issue a Permit for Mountain Lion Research in California

Legislation passed in 2012 requires the Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) to notify the public at least 30 days prior to the issuance of a Scientific Collecting Permit (SCP) to qualified researchers desiring to conduct research on mountain lions.

The legislation is described in Section 4810 of the Fish and Game Code, and Title 14, Section 650(e)(3)(C) of the California Code of Regulations.

A summary of the proposed research is below. Copies of the DRAFT permit are available upon request to CDFW. Please contact the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, Wildlife Branch- MOUNTAIN LION SCP at 1701 Nimbus Road, Rancho Cordova, CA 95670.

Prospective Scientific Collecting Permit Renewal Issued to:

University of California, Santa Cruz, Wilmers Lab – Entity

Dr. Chris Wilmers, Ph.D. – Principal Investigator

Executive Summary:

Santa Cruz Mountain Lion Research Project

Habitat fragmentation poses the greatest threat to wildlife populations in the Bay Area. Our previous research on adult mountain lions (a flagship species for local conservation efforts) in the Santa Cruz Mountains has informed numerous local conservation efforts including a current effort by the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County and Caltrans to acquire property on either side of highway 17 and to place a box culvert underneath the freeway to improve habitat connectivity for mountain lions and other wildlife species. Using GPS collars equipped with accelerometers the proposed research described here will focus on the ultimate metric of mountain lion population health - the habitat needs of kittens to successfully survive and disperse. In so doing, this work will identify critical habitats and linkages throughout the Santa Cruz Mountains, including those potentially connecting the Santa Cruz Mountains to the Hamilton, Gabilan, Sana Lucia, and Diablo mountain ranges. We will also produce a high coverage de novo sequence of the mountain lion genome to help understand the historical connectivity of mountain lions among these mountain ranges. Results from this study will be used to provide guidance to decision makers about ways to minimize and reverse the impacts of habitat fragmentation on mountain lion population health and persistence.