



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Santa Monica Mountains
National Recreation Area

401 W. Hillcrest Drive
Thousand Oaks, California
91360-4207

805-370-2301 phone
805-370-1850 fax

SANTA MONICA MOUNTAINS NATIONAL RECREATION AREA

PRESS RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: October 4, 2011

CONTACT:

Lauren Newman
National Park Service
(805)370-2343

lauren_newman@nps.gov

Andrew Hughan
CA Dept. of Fish and Game
(916) 322-8944
ahughan@dfg.ca.gov

California Department of Fish and Game and National Park Service seek information about mountain lion death

(Thousand Oaks, CA) One of the last remaining male mountain lions in an important wildlife study was found dead in the Southern California mountains recently. The animal, named P-15 in a National Park Service (NPS) research study was discovered on September 11, 2011 and officials say it did not die of natural causes.

The California Department of Fish and Game (DFG) has launched an investigation.

“This is a significant blow to the mountain lion research study,” said NPS wildlife ecologist Seth Riley. “There are not a lot of mountain lions left in the Santa Monica Mountains, and each one plays an important role in the overall local survival of the mountain lion population.”

Each of the lions in the study wear a GPS radio locator collar and P-15’s collar stopped transmitting on August 25, 2011. Shortly after that, DFG and NPS received a call of a dead mountain lion in the Santa Monica Mountains.

Genetic testing by the UCLA Conservation Genetics Research Center conclusively determined that the dead mountain lion was P-15. P-15 was 7-years-old, was first captured in Point Mugu State Park in November of 2009, and has used most of the Santa Monica Mountains as his home range over the two year period that the NPS followed his movements. He is genetically similar to the other mountain lions in the Santa Monica Mountains. P-15 was the only remaining male in the Santa Monica Mountains with a working GPS collar.

NPS biologists devote considerable time and resources to capturing and fitting mountain lions with collars; it may take several weeks for a successful operation and the loss of even one lion is a setback to the research on wildlife movement and the importance of habitat connectivity. P-15’s death comes on the heels of another mountain lion death, P-18, who was killed while attempting to cross I-405 in late August.

EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA

The National Park Service cares for special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.



Mountain lions are designated as a “specially protected species” in California, and it is illegal to hunt or trap them. Given their large spatial and prey requirements, mountain lions and other large carnivores are a strong indicator of ecological health for an area.

The National Park Service believes there are at least 7 other mountain lions in the Santa Monica Mountains including P-12, P-13, and P-19.

The National Park Service began studying mountain lions at Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area in 2002. A total of 21 mountain lions have been tracked via radio telemetry and GPS collars in that time. In addition to studying mountain lion movement, a genetics study is also ongoing to discover indications of possible inbreeding among the mountain lion population in the Santa Monica Mountains.

California Department of Fish and Game and the National Park Service seek information related to the death of P-15 and the parties responsible. The DFG Cal Tip Hotline is 1-800-334-2258.

--NPS--