

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

weird but true!

COOL BOOK GIVEAWAY



KIDS

MOUNTAIN LIONS

The surprising way these wild cats are finding new homes



CUTE POSTER



30 MONEY FACTS

*****ECPLOT 0120A**R-003
 KIM SAGER-FRADKIN
 LOWER EL WHA NATURAL RESOURCES 0948
 760 STRATTON RD,
 PORT ANGELES WA 98363-9525
 00948 P0064
 041
 633



NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC KIDS

Editor in Chief,
Kids and Family, Magazines and Digital
Rachel Buchholz

Senior Design Editor, Magazines Eileen O'Tousa-Crowson

Editorial Kay Boatner, *Senior Editor / Digital Producer*;
Allyson Shaw, *Editor / Digital Producer*

Photo Shannon Hibberd, *Senior Photo Editor*

Production Sean Philpotts, *Manager*

Digital Laura Goertzel, *Senior Manager*

PUBLISHED BY NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC PARTNERS, LLC

EVP and General Manager
David E. Miller

Editorial Director
Nathan Lump

Managing Editor, Magazines
David Brindley

Advertising Bill Graff, *Entertainment Brand Manager*,
bill.graff@disney.com

International Publishing Yulia Petrossian Boyle,
Vice President; Jennifer Jones, *Manager*;
Leanna Lakeram, *Account Manager*

Finance Jeannette Swain, *Director*;
Tammi Colleary-Loach, *Senior Manager, Rights Clearance*;
Joey Wolfkill, *Senior Business Specialist*

Consumer Marketing John MacKethan, *Director, Print Operations*; Mark Viola, *Senior Manager, Circulation Planning*;
Janet H. Zavrel, *Manager, Circulation Planning*

Manufacturing and Distribution Kristin Semeniuk, *Senior Manager*; James Anderson, *Manager, Global Distribution*;
Jennifer Hoff, *Manager, Production*

Publicity Anna Kukulhaus, anna.kukulhaus@natgeo.com;
Caitlin Holbrook, caitlin.holbrook@natgeo.com

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC KIDS (ISSN 1542-3042) is published ten times a year by National Geographic Partners, LLC, Washington, DC 20036. For more information contact natgeo.com/info.

Periodical postage paid at Washington, DC, and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC KIDS, P.O. Box 37545, Boone, IA 50037. Subscriptions: United States, \$30.00; to Canada, \$37.00; elsewhere, \$48.00; all in U.S. funds. Single copy: United States, \$6.00; to Canada, \$10.00; elsewhere, \$15.00; all in U.S. funds. In Canada, Agreement number 1000010298, return undeliverable Canadian addresses to NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC KIDS, P.O. Box 819 STN Main, Markham, Ontario L3P 9Z9.

The submission of photographs and other material to NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC KIDS is done at the risk of the sender; NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC KIDS cannot accept liability for loss or damage.

SUBSCRIBE TO NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC KIDS!
CALL TOLL FREE 1-800-647-5463

MON.-FRI., 8 A.M.-9 P.M. EST, SAT., 9 A.M.-7 P.M. EST
For a subscription to NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC KIDS, send written requests—including name, address, zip code, and payment in U.S. funds or equivalent—to NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC KIDS, P.O. BOX 37545, BOONE, IA 50037
For gift subscriptions, send giver's name and address as well as recipient's.

Copyright © 2023 National Geographic Partners, LLC. All rights reserved. Reproduction of the whole or any part of the contents of NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC KIDS without written permission is prohibited. NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC KIDS and Yellow Border: Registered Trademarks. © Marcas Registradas. Printed in the U.S.A. ISSUE 528

PRINTED ON 100% PEFC-CERTIFIED PAPER—PEFC/29-31-58—
Please recycle.

IN
THIS
ISSUE

12 Mountain Lions on the Move

Scientists are building bridges to connect these cool cats.



20 5 Brainsy Questions

We've got answers to some of your biggest head-scratchers.



22 Wild Animal Vets

See how cute critters get top-notch care at this hospital.



26 30 Cool Things About Money

These fun facts will make you want to fill your piggy bank.



DEPARTMENTS

- 4 **Weird But True!**
- 5 **Creature Feature**
- 6 **Guinness World Records**
- 7 **Bet You Didn't Know!**
- 8 **Brain Candy**
- 10 **Amazing Animals**
- 26 **Fun Stuff**



COVER: GAITO33 / GETTY IMAGES (MOUNTAIN LION); JOHNNY JOHNSON / GETTY IMAGES (ALBATROSS); CREATIV STUDIO HEINEMANN / GETTY IMAGES (EUROS); PAGE 3: DAVE SHREFFLER (MOUNTAIN LION); ALICE BRERETON (ZOMBIE ILLUSTRATION); DOUG GIMSEY / NATURE PICTURE LIBRARY (GLIDER); CREATIV STUDIO HEINEMANN / GETTY IMAGES (EUROS)

JUST FOR PARENTS

For corrections and clarifications, go online. natgeo.com/corrections

Follow us on Twitter @NGKids and like us on Facebook.



EXPLORATION HAPPENS because of you.

When you read with us, you help further the work of our scientists, explorers, and educators around the world.

Parents, to learn more, visit natgeo.com/info

MOUNTAIN LIONS ON THE MOVE

How scientists
are building
bridges to
connect these
wild cats

BY JAMIE KIFFEL-ALCHEH



A young mountain lion extends a paw toward the dark road in front of him, but then ... **HONK!** A loud horn and bright headlights startle the cat, causing him to dart back a few feet. He's standing at the edge of Interstate 5 in Washington State, attempting to cross the highway to find other mountain lions.

The steady stream of dangerous traffic scares him. After a few minutes, he gives up and retreats to the forest he knows. With the highway blocking his way, this cat might never be able to leave the area where he was born—and therefore never find a suitable mate.

TRAPPED

Male mountain lions usually set out to establish new territory and find mates when they're 14 to 18 months old. But this young cat—like others in the area—is trapped in an island-like section of land called the Olympic Peninsula and its surrounding area. There, Interstate 5 blocks the mountain lions from going east. The Columbia River cuts them off in the south. And if they try traveling north past the highway, wide ocean bays prevent them from swimming to the mainland. (See the map on page 16.)

THIS WILDLIFE
CROSSING IN
WASHINGTON STATE
IS SIMILAR TO WHAT
THE NEW BRIDGES
FOR MOUNTAIN LIONS
WILL LOOK LIKE.

A MOUNTAIN
LION HANGS
OUT IN A TREE
IN WASHINGTON
STATE'S OLYMPIC
PENINSULA
REGION.

A mountain
lion can kill prey up
to seven times its
own weight.

A mountain
lion is also called a
puma, cougar,
catamount, and
panther.

Because they can't leave the Olympic Peninsula region, this mountain lion population might have to breed with relatives, making cubs less genetically diverse. That means that over time, unhealthy genes shared by related cats might be passed on to cubs more easily.

"As genetic diversity drops, so does the ability to have cubs," mountain lion ecologist Mark Elbroch says. "Lack of diversity can also result in other physical deformities, such as crooked tails."

This threat to genetic diversity is why a group of humans is trying to connect these cats with unrelated ones that are as close as 10 miles away. The problem? These neighbor mountain lions live on the opposite side of Interstate 5. The solution? A bridge for mountain lions.

WILD CAT CROSSINGS

The Olympic Cougar Project is looking into ways to help Olympic Peninsula mountain lions connect with unrelated cats so their population stays healthy. The idea is to build wildlife crossings: wide, grassy bridges over highways that help this population safely cross to meet and mate with other cats.

Elbroch says the initiative, co-led by the conservation organization Panthera and the Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe, won't just benefit mountain lions. (Five other local Native American tribes and the Washington State



HOUND DOGS TRAINED TO SNIFF OUT MOUNTAIN LIONS SEARCH FOR THE CATS IN WASHINGTON STATE. AFTER THE POOCHES FIND THEM, RESEARCHERS CAN SAFELY COLLAR THE CATS.

Department of Transportation are also helping with the project.)

"These cats are important carnivores that help make healthier forests by spreading the seeds they ingest after they eat their plant-eating prey," he says. "Extending their range will benefit the

entire state of Washington."

But before any bridge can be built, workers need to know the locations of where the cats might try to cross. That will take a little tracking with some high-tech gadgets.

TRACKING MOUNTAIN LIONS

The young male mountain lion doesn't notice a camera take his picture as he returns to the forest from the highway. He also doesn't know that the camera has sent his photo—and his location—to members of the Olympic Cougar Project. If they can capture and collar this cat, they'll be able to track his movements—including where he's trying to cross the interstate.

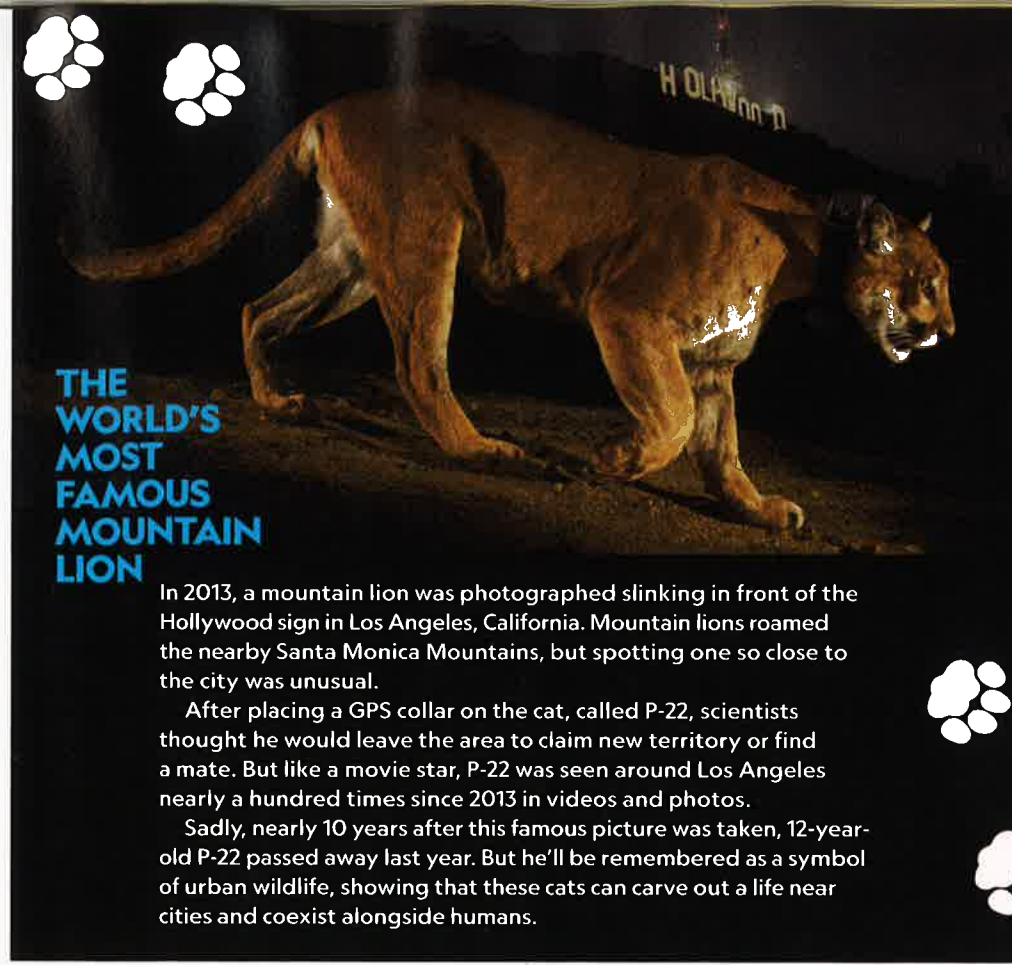
A SCIENTIST MEASURES THE PAW OF A TRANQUILIZED MOUNTAIN LION.



RESEARCHERS PUT A TRACKING COLLAR ON A TRANQUILIZED MOUNTAIN LION.



DAVE SHREFFLER (HOUNDS COLLARING); MEASURING PAW: CHARLOTTE; STEVE WINTER / NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC IMAGE COLLECTION (P.22)



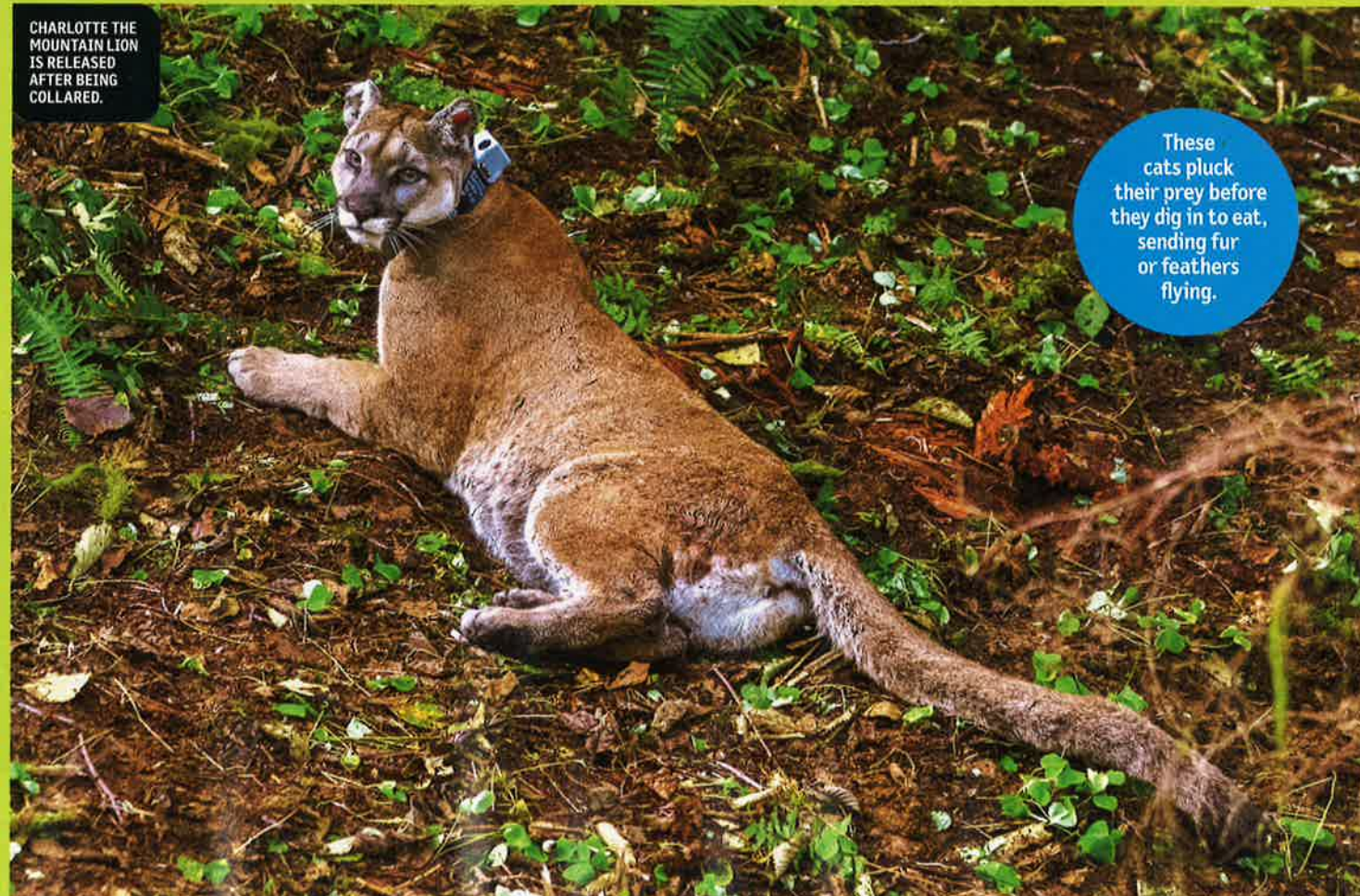
THE WORLD'S MOST FAMOUS MOUNTAIN LION

In 2013, a mountain lion was photographed slinking in front of the Hollywood sign in Los Angeles, California. Mountain lions roamed the nearby Santa Monica Mountains, but spotting one so close to the city was unusual.

After placing a GPS collar on the cat, called P-22, scientists thought he would leave the area to claim new territory or find a mate. But like a movie star, P-22 was seen around Los Angeles nearly a hundred times since 2013 in videos and photos.

Sadly, nearly 10 years after this famous picture was taken, 12-year-old P-22 passed away last year. But he'll be remembered as a symbol of urban wildlife, showing that these cats can carve out a life near cities and coexist alongside humans.

CHARLOTTE THE MOUNTAIN LION IS RELEASED AFTER BEING COLLARED.



These cats pluck their prey before they dig in to eat, sending fur or feathers flying.

Within minutes, workers dash to the area with hound dogs trained to sniff out the cats. "The hounds are taught to chase and trap the cats up in trees, where we can use the dart to sedate them," says wildlife technician Vanessa Castle, a member of the Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe.

The team hits the mountain lion with a tranquilizer dart, then scares it out of the tree before it gets drowsy. "We wait about 10 minutes for it to run away and fall asleep," Castle says.

That's when the team sends a hound to sniff out the cat. About 500 feet away, the pooch finds the cat safely snoozing. The team places a GPS collar around the mountain lion's neck, then leaves before the animal wakes up.

As the wild cat prowls around, the collar will transmit GPS locations to the crew's phones every hour. That way, they can see where the cat goes and figure out the best places to build wildlife crossings. This cat's now one of more than 70 mountain lions that the project has collared since 2018.

CATS ON CAMERA

But that's not the only way the Olympic Cougar Project is tracking mountain lions. Other hidden cameras simply snap pictures so scientists can learn how many animals are out there.

The photos reveal some surprises. "We see golden eagles, bears, and bobcats eating off a mountain lion kill," Castle says. "Seeing how many animals

Mountain lions have the widest geographic range of any land mammal in the Western Hemisphere (except for humans).

the mountain lions are feeding shows how important they are to their ecosystem."

Sometimes the photos are funny. "The animals can smell our scent on the cameras," Castle says. "We get a lot of silly shots of mountain lions showing their faces right in the cameras!"

FINDING FREEDOM

The young mountain lion approaches another spot near Interstate 5. He can't cross here either, but the tracking data tells the team that several other cats have shown up in the same

area. That means the spot could be a good place for a mountain lion bridge.

"Our project got a photo of a female and a cub trying to cross there just a few weeks ago," Elbroch says. "They didn't cross, but they *could* cross if we build a bridge there."

Mountain lions wouldn't be the only creatures using these bridges. The wildlife crossings could give safe passage to other animals that need to expand their territory. And some animals like wolves, which once roamed the peninsula until they were declared extinct in the area nearly a hundred years ago, might cross back in and reclaim the land.

Project members hope that in five to 10 years, a mountain lion will walk across a new, grass-covered bridge, sniff the air, and pick up the scent of a female mountain lion. At last, he might claim new territory and begin a family with a cat from a different population.

He'll never know it, but those steps he takes above a busy highway might be the first steps toward a healthier future for his species.



LILU THE MOUNTAIN LION CHECKS OUT HER SURROUNDINGS.

Until they're about nine months old, mountain lion cubs have spots to help them hide in the forest.



TWO MOUNTAIN LION KITTENS SNUGGLE TOGETHER IN WASHINGTON STATE.



BRAMBLE THE MOUNTAIN LION CLIMBS A TREE AFTER BEING COLLARED.

PLAY!

TELLING TAILS

Mountain lions use their long, thick tails for balance as they run, climb trees, and scamper over rocks. Match these pics of other animal tails with the critters they belong to.



- A Bengal tiger
- B Spider monkey
- C Ring-tailed lemur
- D Long-tailed pangolin
- E Spiny-tailed lizard



ANSWERS: 1. C, 2. D, 3. E, 4. A, 5. B