

KIDS.....
Here's YOUR SECTION!

There is lots to learn about
COUGARS – the LARGEST WILD CAT
in North America,
so let's Get Started!



I'm a really Cool cat!

KIDS

HERE'S YOUR CORNER TO LEARN LOTS OF STUFF ABOUT COUGARS!



Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife

COUGARS ARE THE BIGGEST WILD CAT IN NORTH AMERICA,
with the exception of the jaguar, which is seen on very rare occasions in our
southwestern states. The largest cougar ever killed weighed 276 pounds!

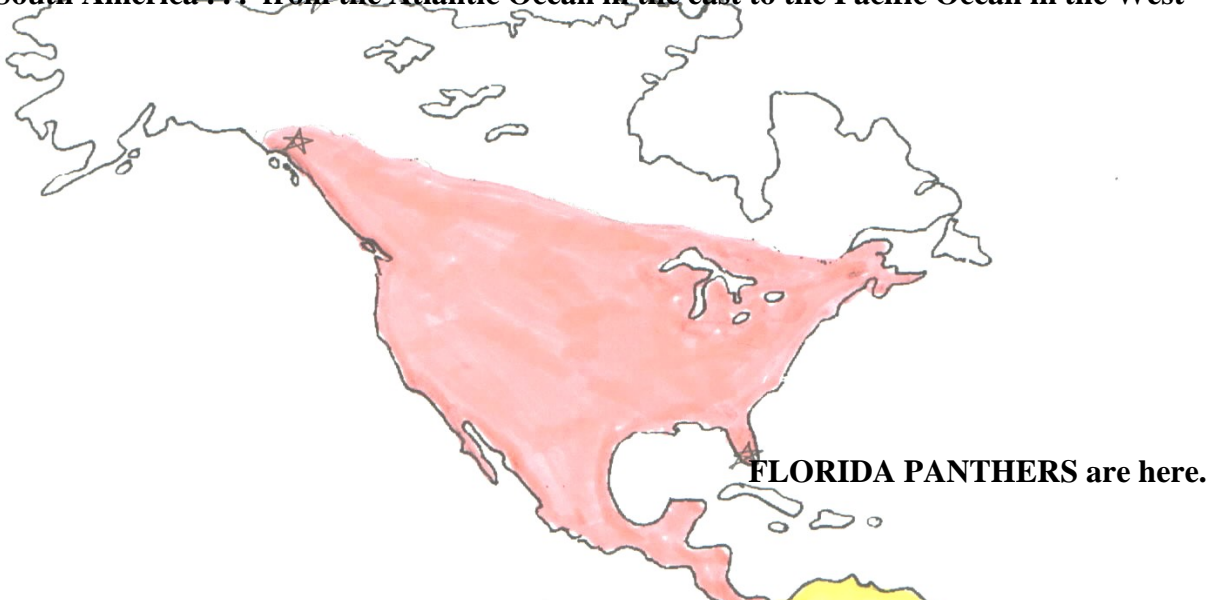


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HERE'S A HISTORY LESSON YOU WILL WANT TO LEARN.

When America was first settled cougars ranged from British Columbia, to the very tip of South America . . . from the Atlantic Ocean in the east to the Pacific Ocean in the West



Since the early 1900's cougars have been thought **EXTINCT** east of the Mississippi River. There is a small population struggling to survive in southern Florida. People in Florida call their cougars “panthers,” but they are the same animal.

EXTINCT means: The cougars are considered gone, due to been hunted and killed in large numbers. Not everyone agrees that cougars in eastern North America are extinct. **SIGHTINGS** are now on the increase!

A **SIGHTING** means: More and more reliable, honest people are reporting that they have seen a cougar in the wild, in one of our eastern or central states, or that they have taken a video or photograph. Some people have found tracks and **SCAT**.

SCAT: what you remove from your pet cat's litter box!

FUN FACTS



FACT: COUGARS ARE VERY BIG AND VERY LONG!

Female cougars may weigh from 80 to 130 lbs. average when grown. Male cougars weigh 110 to even 200 lbs and are 6 to 3 feet long from nose to tip of their tails!

Cougar kittens (or cubs) weigh just over 1 pound when born, but within 10 to 20 days double their weight! At 2 months old they may weigh 9 pounds ... and gain more every day!

ACTIVITY:

Ask Mom or Dad to take a tape measure and help you mark out 6 to 8 feet with chalk or tape on a sidewalk . . . you'll find a place, but don't mark on the walls ... that won't make Mom very happy! HINT: Some dads are 6 feet tall! Some even taller! Ask your tall Dad to stretch out on the floor! WOW! Cougars ARE VERY LONG!



WHAT COLOR ARE COUGARS?

Cougars are a plain color called "tawny". It is a beige, tan or sandy color. Some cougars are more of a "reddish" tan while others are more of a "grey" tan. Cougars' eyes are a beautiful golden yellow and they have ROUND pupils just like you have! (Your pet cat does NOT have round pupils!) PELAGE is the correct name for a cougar's "pelt" (fur or coat). Their faces have white markings and black. Their underbellies are a lighter tan and their fur is longer and softer than on their backs and sides.

Cougar kittens are spotted when they are young and have a "ringed" tail ... like a raccoon's but not as bushy . . . Their eyes are a pretty baby blue until they mature. Cougar kittens lose their spots at about 6 months old. Spots provide CAMOUFLAGE from enemies.

CAMOUFLAGE means: Blending in with the natural surroundings such as bushes, weeds and trees.



COUGARS HAVE LONG HEAVY TAILS!

WHY? To help them "steer", balance and swiftly change direction when chasing prey. A cougar's tail is about 3 feet long and has a black tip of fur at the end.



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Do you know how
HOW MANY NAMES
the **Cougar** HAS?

1? 4? 3? 7? 5?

IF YOU GUESSED **ANY**
OF THESE NUMBERS...

YOU LOSE!

ZAP!



THE COUGAR HAS OVER
150 names...

More than Any Other animal in the

WHOLE WIDE WORLD!

Some of the most common names are:
COUGAR, PUMA, Panther and Mountain
Lion.

CAN COUGARS ROAR?



NO! Cougars can purr, scream like a woman... (some people who have heard cougars scream say it is extremely scary!) Cougars yowl, caterwaul, GROWL and CHIRP when calling their kittens, but they cannot ROAR!

DO COUGARS LIVE IN FAMILIES?



YES, BUT THE FATHER NEVER LIVES WITH THE MOTHER AND HIS KITTENS. Male cougars are **SOLITARY** animals and live alone. Males and females only get together for a few days to mate. When the kittens (or cubs) are born, the female raises them until they are about 1 ½ years old. Then she sends them on their way to live apart from her. The kittens may stay together for a while, but eventually each young cougar must find its own home range. They will avoid all other cougars until it is time for them to mate. **MUTUAL AVOIDANCE** is the term scientists use to explain how cougars exist alone.

Females have **HOME RANGES** that may overlap with her mother's home range, but they probably do not socialize. Male cougars have **TERRITORIES** that overlaps the female home ranges ... but another male cougar must **STAY OUT!** So "teen-aged" young male cougars must search for their own home range or risked being killed by an adult male, which could be their own father.

HOME RANGES are the areas that an animal lives in. It is very familiar with its home range. **TERRITORIES** are home ranges that a defended against other members of the same species.



WHERE DOES A COUGAR LIVE?

Cougars roam their **TERRITORIES** and **HOME RANGES**. Adult females will have several **DEN SITES** within that area. A **DEN SITE** might be under a rock outcropping, in a cave, in the midst of thick briar brambles, or perhaps under the low hanging branches of a tree. There a cougar can sleep, give birth to it's young, and escape from bad weather. A **HOME RANGE** must have adequate cover for **STALKING** prey, plenty of prey animals and a water source. A male cougar will have several resting places; edges of meadows and other places with a good view are favorites.

Male cougars protect their territories from other males by making **SCRAPES**. A **SCRAPE** is a pile of pine needles, leaves and twigs "scraped" into a pile with the paws and often marked with urine to warn other male cougars that "This territory belongs to ME!" Cougars can be active day or night, but are likely to be most active at **DUSK** and **DAWN**. Animals that most active at sunrise and sunset are **CRESPIUCULAR**.



HOW STRONG ARE COUGARS?

Cougars are **EXTREMELY** strong and powerful! They have few if any enemies **except human beings**. A **FULLY GROWN** male or female cougar can stalk and kill an animal weighing **7 TIMES MORE** than it does! A cougar's very powerful jaw and razor sharp teeth are deadly weapons! One bite to the back of the neck of an elk or deer is fatal! The cougar's body is mostly all muscle, with just a small part bones and organs. Don't forget those razor sharp claws! Cougars are **PREDATORS**. **PREDATORS** stalk, kill and eat other animals.



WHAT DOES A COUGAR EAT?

A cougar is a **CARNIVORE**. A **CARNIVORE IS AN ANIMAL** that eats meat. The eastern cougar's main food source is the white-tailed deer. A cougar kills and eats from one deer every 7 to 10 days. They will also kill and feed on other smaller animals such as rabbits, porcupines, raccoons, even mice. Other entrees on their menu include birds and farm animals ... even domestic pets. After a cougar feeds on a kill, eating the heart and liver first, the carcass is left for another meal. With its paws, a cougar rakes sticks, dirt and leaves on top of the kill to protect it and to hide it. The cougar usually stays near the kill and watches that no other animal such as a coyote or bear tries to steal a free meal! Sometimes the intruder gets away with meat!

A cougar's tongue is covered with **PAPILLAE**, sharp, raspy projections that allow the big cat to remove all the meat from an animal's bones. The **PAPILLAE** act as a comb aid the cougar in grooming itself. Cougars are very clean animals!

ACTIVITY: Your pet cat has papillae on it's tongue too. put a dab of cat food on your finger and feel the roughness when it licks it off! It will tickle!



MANY PEOPLE THINK THEY HAVE SEEN A COUGAR, BUT IT WAS REALLY A BOBCAT!

WE'RE GOING TO TEACH YOU TO KNOW THE DIFFERENCE!
Here are some pointers in what to look for:

A COUGAR HAS:

1. A very long, heavy tail
2. Only has spots when very young, until about 6 months old.
3. Has small, rounded ears that are blackish or brownish on the back.
4. Does not have sideburns
5. IS VERY BIG! From 80 to 200 lbs!



A BOBCAT HAS:

1. A short, stubby tail which may be as long as 12 inches.
2. Usually has spots! (When young AND when fully grown!) But some bobcats are tawny like cougars with very faint spots.
3. Has more pointed ears with a tuft at the tip. The back of the ears are white with a black border.
4. Has a ruff or sideburns.
5. IS NOT VERY BIG! Weights only 20 to 45 lbs when grown.



NOW, LET'S LEARN TO TRACK A COUGAR!

Scout your area and look for tracks this winter when there is snow on the ground. Because cougars, like house cats, don't like to get their feet wet unless they have to.... it is very difficult to track cougars in the summer time. Cougars walk **PERIMETERS**. **PERIMETERS** are the edges of fields, houses and roads. They also like to follow stream beds where prey are often found getting drinks. Cougars usually walk. . . fast or slow. Dogs and coyotes TROT.

Cougars are **PERFECT WALKERS**, WHICH MEANS THEIR REAR FEET WILL COME UP AND STEP DIRECTLY (or slightly forward) of the spot where the front foot stepped.

Here's a sketch to refer to:

Front foot

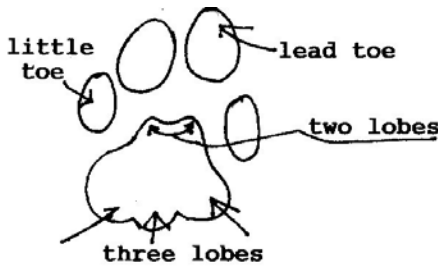
Hind foot



Size 3 1/2 to 4 inches wide

CAN YOU TELL IF THE TRACK BELOW IS A LEFT OR A RIGHT TRACK?

Clue: Look at your hand! (Or foot!)



ALWAYS LOOK FOR THE LEAD TOE. . . THE TOE THAT IS LONGER. . . OR STICKS OUT FARTHER THAN THE OTHER TOES. Also look for two lobes at the front of the pad and three lobes at the back.

Answer: It is a left foot!

You will not see claw marks on a cougar's walking track. However, if the ground is slippery and a cougar uses his claws for TRACTION, it will look like a slit, and not a hole as a dog track shows.

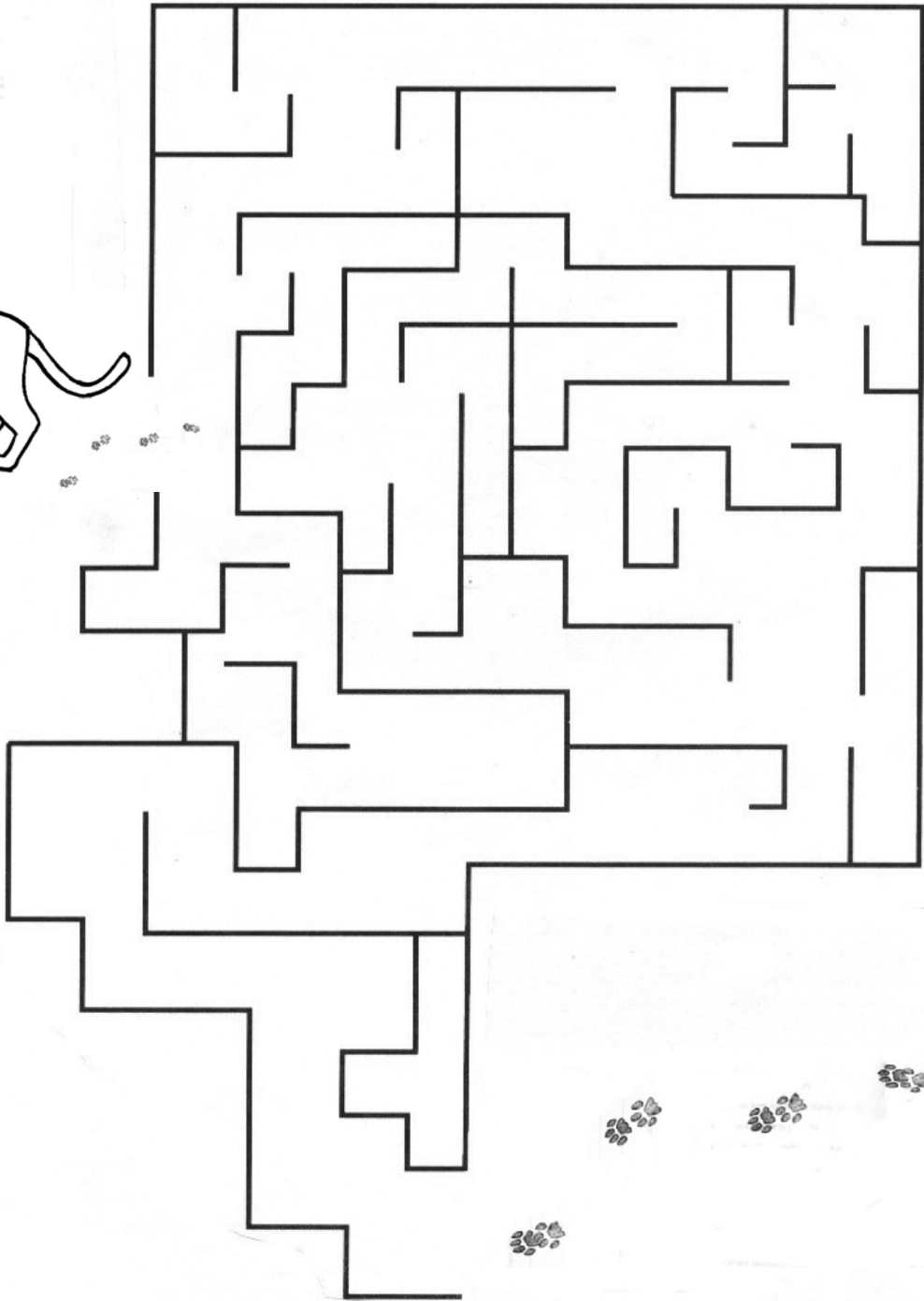
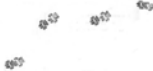


HERE IS A TYPICAL DOG TRACK. NOTICE THAT THE TOES ARE EVEN AT THE FRONT. Notice the wedge-shaped holes left by the dog's nails. The pad may be of various shapes depending on the breed of dog, but it will not be as distinctive as the pad of the cougar. Check carefully!

LEARN THE DIFFERENCES!



CAN YOU TRACK THE COUGAR?



WORD FIND

Find and circle all the words you've learned!

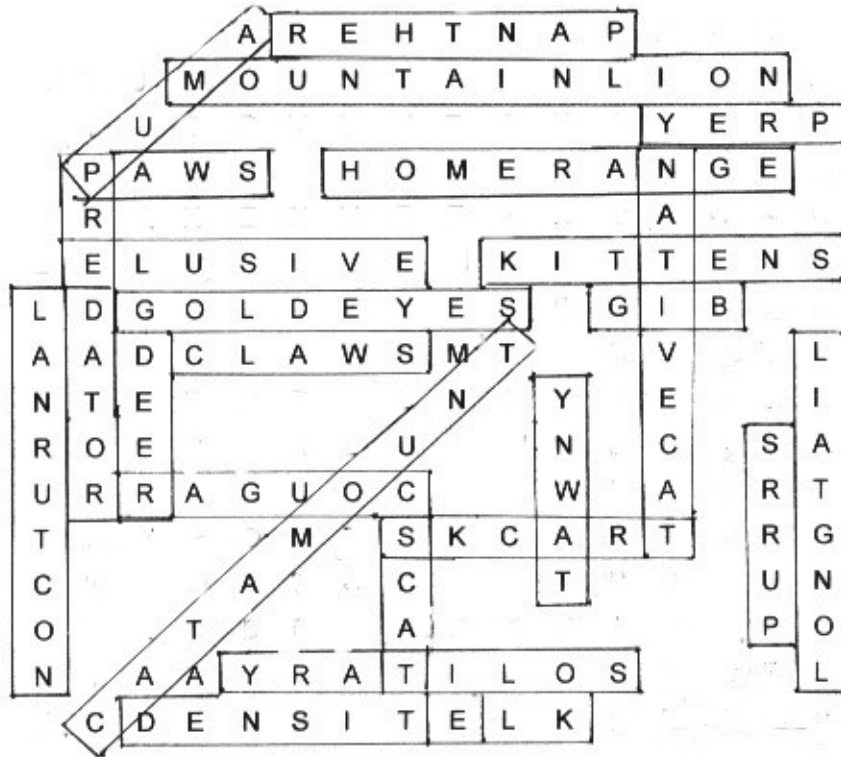


BIG
CATAMOUNT
CLAWS
COUGAR
DEER
DEN SITE
ELK
GOLD EYES

HOME RANGE
KITTENS
LONG TAIL
MOUNTAIN LION
NATIVE CAT
NOCTURNAL
PANTHER
PREDATOR

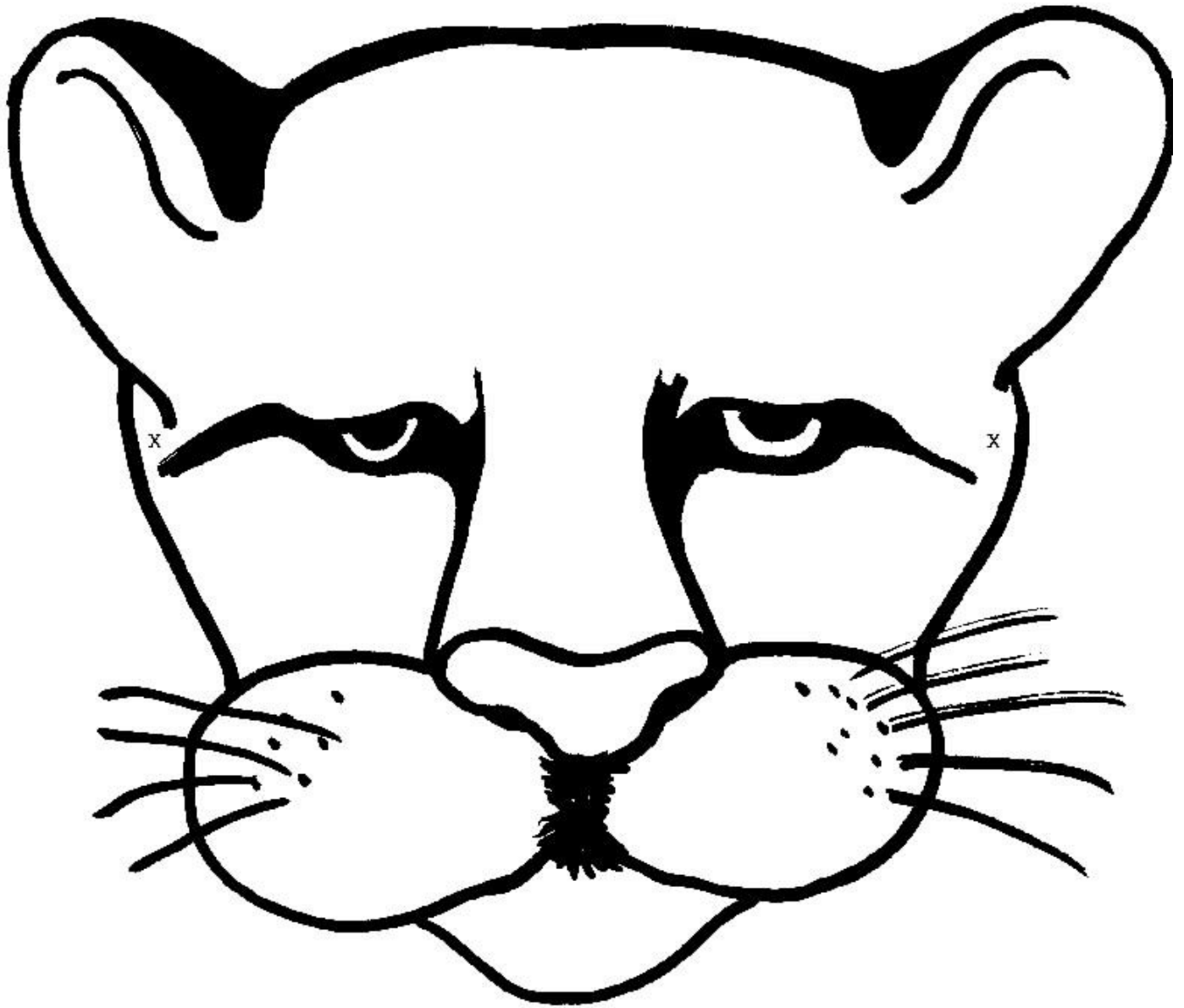
PAWS
PREY
PUMA
PURRS
SCAT
SOLITARY
TAWNY
TRACKS

Are you ready for the answers?



HERE'S A COUGAR MASK TO COLOR AND WEAR!

REMEMBER THE CORRECT COLORS TO USE? WHAT COLOR WILL YOU USE FOR THE EYES?



Print the cougar face, then have a responsible adult cut out the eyes and punch a hole at each "X." Attach a cord or elastic, then GRRRRR!!! Pretend you're a cougar

FIND ANIMAL TRACKS AND MAKE A PLASTER CAST

HERE'S HOW. . .

First, find a track! It can be any track ... a rabbit, deer or whatever you find! CAREFULLY remove any sticks, leaves or pine needles that might be around it. Have your parents or guardian cut a 2-liter soda bottle into strips 2 1/2 inches wide.



You can also use any other large heavy plastic bottle. Press one of the strips around the track. Pack dirt against the strip to reinforce it. Next, in an old can (ask mom for one) mix PLASTER OF PARIS with enough water to make a pancake-like mixture.

Pour the mixture into the soda bottle circle, enough to cover the track completely, almost to the top of the ring. Allow to dry. (The warmer and drier the day, the shorter drying time.)

When dry, remove cast and brush off any clinging dirt. THIS IS A NEGATIVE CAST. To make a POSITIVE CAST, cover the negative cast with motor oil, vegetable oil or Vaseline. Place the flat side of the negative cast down on level ground **with the oiled side up!** Place another clean strip from the soda bottle around the cast so that at least 1 1/2 inches is above the negative cast. Mix another batch of plaster of Paris and pour over the cast. Let dry. CAREFULLY PRY THEM APART. This is now your positive cast.

HAVE FUN!

YOU WILL NEED:

1. CIRCLES CUT FROM A 2-LITER SODA BOTTLE.
2. Plaster of Paris
3. A stick to mix with.
4. A waterproof jar to store your Plaster of Paris in.
5. A bottle of water.
6. Oil or Vaseline.



“Cougar-Color” Cookies

INGREDIENTS:

½ cup margarine

1 cup peanut butter

1 ½ cups sugar

3 eggs

1 cup flour

½ teaspoon baking soda

½ teaspoon salt

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

1 cup each:

Mini white chocolate chips

Mini dark chocolate chips

Bake at 350° until lightly browned at edges.

These cookies are the very same colors as a cougar!

