

# BAY AREA PUMA PROJECT

## OVERVIEW

Launched in mid-2008, the Bay Area Puma Project (BAPP) is the first major study of mountain lions in the San Francisco Bay Area. Felidae Conservation Fund, UC Santa Cruz, and the California Department of Fish and Game have teamed up for a 10-year research and conservation effort to increase our understanding of our native apex predator. Using innovative GPS-accelerometer collars, coupled with extensive outreach and education, BAPP seeks not only to study the Bay Area's puma population, but also to build public interest and support for protecting this keystone species in its natural habitat, and thereby help ensure healthy and sustainable ecosystems.

## CURRENT STATUS

- Loss and fragmentation of critical habitat
- Disappearance of puma movement corridors
- Compromised genetic diversity of population
- More frequent human-puma encounters
- More pumas killed crossing roads
- Livestock and pet casualties growing
- Depredation permits increasing
- Tensions building in local communities

The mountain lion is known by many names (puma, cougar, panther, catamount, shadow cat, ghost cat, screamer). Though it has the largest home range of any land animal, it has historically tended to avoid people. However, with persistent human population growth, especially in the Bay Area, human-puma conflict is on the rise.



As puma habitat and movement corridors are increasingly invaded by human development, more sightings and encounters with pumas are inevitable. Pumas are being killed more often by cars and depredation permits (issued when livestock or pets are attacked), and increasing news reports of puma encounters are driving growing public concern. With human encroachment continuing to degrade wildlife habitat, it is vital to address these issues before it's too late. People must learn to co-exist with all species, in complete ecosystems, in order for the natural world to sustain for future generations.



## RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- Track, carefully capture and tag pumas for monitoring
- Generate GPS-accelerometer data on locations and body motions
- Analyze puma interactions with both the natural and human world
- Evaluate puma behavioral response to increased human activity
- Generate maps and animations showing key habitats and corridors

Previously, even basic facts about the Bay Area's puma population were unknown. BAPP research will produce unprecedented understanding about this furtive species, including range, density, movement, feeding patterns, and the effects of human development, such as roads, on puma populations. Working with landowners and state agencies, BAPP scientists are using custom GPS-accelerometer collars to track and record pumas and their activities in 3D on a continual basis.

By analyzing the data and creating maps and animations, we can better understand the dynamics of the puma population, the critical role they play in maintaining the health and balance of the ecosystem, and the challenges this keystone species faces while traversing an ever more fragmented landscape. The insights gained from this research will enable us to develop new conservation and land use strategies to minimize human-puma conflict, and foster a healthy co-existence between humans and pumas in the region.





## OUTREACH AND EDUCATION

- Local community meetings and involvement
- Classroom presentations and field trips
- Interactive online experiences

A key focus of BAPP is to build public understanding about pumas and ecosystems, and the effect of human activities on the natural world. In meetings with local communities, the BAPP team dispels fears and reassures residents by replacing myths with facts, and by helping people stay informed on the project and its findings.

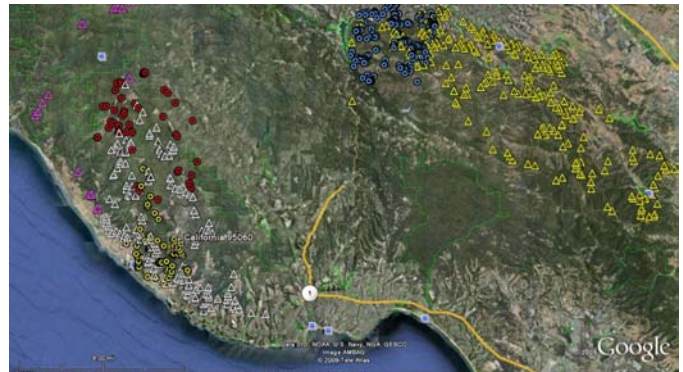
In presentations and on field trips with Bay Area students, many of whom were raised in suburban settings with little or no connection to nature, learning about BAPP's local wildlife science gives students a deeper appreciation for their environment, and encourages their commitment to creating a world that people and wildlife can share peacefully.

The Internet age has created entirely new avenues for projects like BAPP to reach young people. By offering a mobile game, an interactive web portal, and social networking activities, BAPP is reaching out to young people in their native digital tongue.

## CONSERVATION GOALS

- Protection of movement corridors
- Permanent habitat preservation
- Increased awareness and support

BAPP's primary goal is to convince local communities and policy makers of the importance of preserving wild pumas within the ecosystems of the Bay Area. If movement corridors are protected, healthy populations of the puma will sustain and ecosystems will remain in natural balance. And by permanently securing critical habitat, we can ensure that viable puma populations will persist, with minimal human encroachment.



One of the most important aspects of BAPP is raising awareness and support in the surrounding communities. BAPP is initiating a public dialog regarding pumas, Bay Area wildlife, and the fragile ecological balance that is rapidly vanishing. With better understanding, we can create a future where people appreciate the significance of protecting this treasure of biodiversity we take for granted.

## HOW YOU CAN HELP

### • Request an Event •

If you're in a school or community organization, and you want your group to learn more about pumas and BAPP, email [info@felidaefund.org](mailto:info@felidaefund.org) with your suggestion for an event or presentation. We will arrange for a BAPP team member to visit your group and teach about pumas and the project.

### • Offer to Volunteer •

We have a wide range of volunteer opportunities for motivated people who care about our local habitats and species. You can help us with events, create informational materials, develop technology, and much more. If you're interested, send email to [info@felidaefund.org](mailto:info@felidaefund.org) and tell us about yourself.

### • Make a Donation •

BAPP's funding comes largely from concerned individuals, corporations and small foundations. The best way to make a donation is visit our site at [www.felidaefund.org](http://www.felidaefund.org) and select from a range of options for supporting the project, from our online donation page to our Adopt-A-Puma program.

### • Spread the Word •

Another great way to help is to spread the word. We have a Facebook Group [facebook.com/felidaefund](https://www.facebook.com/felidaefund) and a Facebook Cause [causes.com/felidaefund](https://www.causes.com/felidaefund) with the latest news and events. By joining these, and telling your friends, you can stay informed and help us preserve local pumas and their habitats!

**To Learn More or Get Involved, visit [www.BAPP.org](http://www.BAPP.org) and [www.FelidaeFund.org](http://www.FelidaeFund.org)**

