

Mysterious 'Cats' Reported Seen in Alaska Wilderness

By JIM DOUTHIT

Alaska's mysterious, roving DPs (displaced panthers) have again been spotted by motorists. At least seven persons have reported sighting a cougar on the Steese highway about 100 miles north of Fairbanks.

Cougars are not native to Alaska. Tales of sighting the great cats have circulated in the territory for several years. No one has yet been able to bring in a specimen.

Among the persons recently seeing an animal they claim only "looked like a cougar" were Fairbankers Jimmy Ing, his wife and three friends as well as Bill Parker, an old-timer along the Steese highway.

Spotted Huge Cat

Ing and his friends spotted the huge cat about three weeks ago, just south of Eagle Summit. They were in two cars and saw the cat for at least 45 seconds. "Enough time to get a good look at it," Ing said.

The cat was first spotted in the middle of the road, it ran off into the brush.

Parker sighted a huge cat, described much the same as that seen by Ing, at almost the same spot at about the same time.

Several tourists have also reported spotting a cougar in the Eagle Summit area.

Several Reports

A territorial police patrol to Circle last week-end uncovered the several reports of the phantom beast.

Wildlife experts in the Interior say that it is unlikely but not impossible for a cougar to be in Alaska, especially this far north.

The cougar, or mountain lion, is usually found in forested mountain areas of the western United States and Canada and occasionally found even on the east coast.

Theoretically it is possible for a cougar to have moved north into Alaska after following deer in western Canada. Because of the animal's habits, it is not thought likely that a cougar would leave the forest areas farther south to venture into an area such as Eagle summit, where mostly brush is found.

No signs of cougar kills have ever been found in the Interior, as far as is known.

Report Made

A report made by two men trapping in the Big Delta area may account for some of the cougar stories. The trappers reported a lynx with a very long tail, which might have easily been mistaken for a cougar. Both men were familiar with cougars and definitely stated that the

Big Delta cat was only a lynx.

The well-known Alaskan lynx is a cat weighing about 50 to 70 pounds, with a very short, stub of a tail tuft of hair on pointed ears and a distinctive face. A cougar is larger, longer, carries a long smooth tail, is generally very wary of human kind and has a lion-like head with more rounded ears.

Most of the people who have reported sighting an Alaskan cougar admit that they base their opinion mostly on the fact that they see a long tail. Most of them have known cougars only through pictures.

Alaskan woodsmen, whether or not they believe in the presence of the cat, are curiously waiting for someone to kill or capture the animal which has given rise to the many mountain lion reports.

Auto Sales Set Record, GM Reveals

PONTIAC, Mich., Aug. 12 —

Pontiac's half-millionth 1955 model car, a Star Chief Safari Custom Station wagon, came off the assembly line today setting a new production record for Pontiac motor division, R. M. Critchfield, general manager and GM vice president announced.

"It is the first time in the 29 year history of Pontiac motor that production has reached 500,000 units in a single model year."

Mr. Critchfield said, "The unexpected popularity of the all-new 1955 Pontiacs has pushed sales higher than any sales rate we have ever experienced."

"During the last 10 days in July, Pontiac dealers across the nation sold as a total more new Pontiacs than during any 10 day period in their history. We sold 21,626 new Pontiacs in the July 21 to 31 period with the month's total reaching 500,000 new units. Sales for July were appreciably more than the total number of Pontiacs built during the month, despite the record production rate."



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