

COUGARS

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That system allowed biologist Robert Wielgus to conduct several studies of human-cougar conflicts and cougar behavior in zones with little-to-no hunting and zones with a lot of hunting. At the time, he was the director of the Large Carnivore Conservation Lab at Washington State University.

“We thought we’d find that areas with the most hunting would have the lowest number of cougars, and lower numbers of cougar-related problems,” Wielgus says.

But that was not the case. In high-hunting areas, there were more attacks on livestock and people than in similar low-hunting areas. Wielgus found that when a male adult cougar was killed, three or four younger males would enter the territory and compete with each other. These aggressive, young males were much more likely to attack humans or livestock.

Wielgus also found that cougar hunting had unexpected consequences for game animals, some of which are endangered.

Male cougars’ territories overlap with the females. If a male cougar encounters a female with cubs that aren’t his own, he’ll often kill that female.

He explained that if a male was killed, and “several young males move into her territory, she’ll move to a place where cougars aren’t. Usually, that’s higher elevation,” said Wielgus.

That’s a problem, because when those cougars move, they also change their diets. There are no white-tail deer at high elevation. Instead, the females were hunting endangered (now extinct in the U.S.) mountain caribou



Submitted photo

Cougars are relatively common in the Blue Mountains region of Oregon.

There are only a few studies that really look into this. And they’re all regional.”

— **Biologist Robert Wielgus**

and bighorn sheep.

Another study in British Columbia looked at the effects of sport hunting on cougar-human interactions. They also found that sport hunting increased attacks on

ODFW tracks cougar hunter success

Based on mandatory hunter reporting, hunters in Oregon killed 350 cougars in the state during 2018, according to the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife. The biggest tally among the state’s six cougar-hunting zones was 110 cougars killed in the Blue Mountains zone, which includes Baker, Union and Wallowa counties.

humans and livestock.

“There are only a few studies that really look into this,” says Wielgus. “And

they’re all regional. But now, we have Laundry’s paper — and each time, the results are the same.”

CORONAVIRUS

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But other officials told Congress that they lack basic supplies such as respiratory masks and functioning testing kits. Only about a dozen state and local laboratories can run tests outside the CDC in Atlanta because the kits it sent out nationwide this month included a faulty component.

While Trump tried to ease concerns over coronavirus, he fanned public panic over Ebola in 2014, claiming at the time that the Obama administration lied about the danger. He repeatedly urged officials to bar U.S. health workers and others who had contracted the virus overseas from returning home for treatment.

Democrats warned that the administration’s response is insufficient — citing prior administration cuts to the CDC — and that its request to Congress for \$2.5 billion in special funding doesn’t address the scope of the problem.

Sen. Kamala Harris, D-Calif., said Trump has “not done nearly enough” and said California communities are responding to the virus “despite poor coordination and vague guidance from the federal government.”

“More than any other state, California has been on the front lines of the COVID-19 response,” she wrote in a letter to Trump on Wednesday. “Your administration has yet to reimburse state and local entities for costs incurred as part of the federal response to COVID-19 — or even provided written assurances of any plan to do so.”

Republicans suggested that Democrats were too eager to criticize the administration. No sooner did the White House release the funding request “than some politicians were on the air criticizing you for not asking for enough,” said Rep. Greg Walden, R-Ore.

House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy, R-Calif., said he expects the funding to land at about \$4 billion. He called a request for \$8 billion from Senate Minority Leader Charles E. Schumer, D-N.Y., a political ploy. Trump said Wednesday that he would take whatever Congress gives him.

Michael Brown, who lost his job as emergency management director and saw his reputation savaged during Hurricane Katrina, said the lack of clear direction compounds pressure — already immense — for those trying to respond to urgent national threats and crises.

Brown, now a conservative radio host in Denver, said his biggest regret after Katrina was reciting the Bush administration’s upbeat talking points rather than explaining the logistical obstacles he faced after the hurricane devastated Louisiana and other Gulf Coast states, killing an estimated 1,800 people.

“I think the American public would rather hear that than a bunch of B.S. talking points,” he said.

Brown said CDC officials were right to offer unvarnished warnings, even if it meant resisting or defying White House pressure.

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Baker County Library (Archive Room)
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Class starts at 6:15pm

PARKINSON’S SUPPORT GROUP, open to those with Parkinson’s/Caregiver’s. Contact Judith Sather at 208-855-9199. **Group will resume the Third Monday in April 2020 at 4:30pm at GRH**

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Joseph Methodist Church (basement on northside)
Joseph, OR
6-7pm. Contact 541-398-1398

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