

Ike Says . . .

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four encounters with cougars while hunting elk. I have heard there was a sighting of a cougar just south of Vernonia and one just north of town in the last couple of months. There was a cougar hit and killed by a car over by Clatskanie and also a rumor of one being hit out by Camp 18 on highway 26. They are here people, and all indicators are that they are a growing threat to

our deer and elk herds. How long will it be before we are facing the same declines that are occurring in eastern Oregon?

Preliminary results are coming out of the Mt. Emily cougar study that has been ongoing for two years. Eighteen cougars were fitted with GPS radio tracking collars so that researchers could find cougar kill sites. Over the course of the study, six collared cougars were lost due to malfunction of

the collars, damage removal, being hit on a highway, or leaving the area. Note, not one was removed by hunters. The results so far are 1800 kill sites with deer making up 65%, elk 30% and other animals only 5%. Calves were 75% of the elk kills. With 18 functioning collars and 1800 kills observed (surely not all kills were observed) this works out to 4.2 kills per month on average per cougar. This does not take into

account the six collared cougars that fell out of the study during the two years, and which would increase the kills per cougar per month. It appears that ODF&W has confirmed it's own documentation, in the Oregon Cougar Plan, and that of researchers in other states. The facts are in, people, cougars eat deer and elk, around 270,000 of them per year! Oregon simply will not support this type of predation

and provide hunting opportunity. With hunters taking only 43,000 deer and elk per year (and decreasing), I think we are more than doing our part of sharing the wildlife with the rest of the critters

Izaak Walton League, Nehalem Valley Chapter
meets monthly on the 3rd Thursday at 7:00 p.m. Call 503-429-7193 for location.

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