

ROSEBURG'S GADDIS PARK

Cougar warning is no tale

Police urge people to avoid park, section of bike path after recent sightings; Roseburg man spots big cat this morning

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The News-Review

Police are asking people to avoid Roseburg's Gaddis Park and a section of a city bike path after dark because of two cougar sightings.

But Steve Burton didn't know that when he decided to ride his bike to

work today, as he does often, along the bike path.

Burton, who lives in west Roseburg, said he saw a cougar just as he rode past the park's baseball fields about 9 a.m.

"It was down by the river, going through the brush," said Burton, who works for The News-Review.

He estimated the cougar weighed between 150 and 200 pounds. Burton, who is a hunter, said "it was a bigger one than I've seen before (in the woods)."

"I got goose bumps," he recalled of the encounter, estimating he was about 20 yards from the big cat. "I took off. I kept going the way I was coming."

Burton said the cougar was alone and no one else was on the bike path or in the area this morning.

Although Burton hadn't yet had a chance to report the sighting to police this morning, Roseburg police say they've already received two reports of cougar sightings in the area of Gaddis Park, according to a police department news release.

The latest sighting was near the south end of Cedar Street just before midnight Tuesday. The first sighting

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Cougar: Mostly nocturnal animals

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As cougars are nocturnal and both sightings were after dark, police are asking people to avoid the park as well as a nearby part of the bike path that is between Deer Creek and Interstate 5, at night.

Dunbar said he can only remember half a dozen reports of cougars in the city within the last 25 years. The incidents included a car striking a cougar on Diamond Lake

agency.

Boulevard.

People who encounter cougars should make noise and make themselves look as large as possible, the release said. People should never run from a cougar, as this can provoke the animal to attack.

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ROSEBURG

Cougar found dead on freeway

A cougar probably killed by a vehicle was found at about 8 a.m. Tuesday on Interstate 5 near Roseburg High School, according to the Oregon Department of Transportation.

The animal's body was found close to the northbound onramp from Harvard Avenue.

ODOT took the body to the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, where it was stored in a freezer for examination.

Tod Lum, the big game biologist for Roseburg's ODFW office, said "it's rare, but it's not rare" to have a cougar killed on the road.

PRINEVILLE

Injured cougar killed by deputy

An injured cougar was killed by a reserve Crook County sheriff's deputy who found in near a Prineville-area home. The sheriff's office says a driver reported he struck the

animal Thursday on Highway 26. When deputies arrived it ran off. They feared it could threaten nearby residents, so they tracked it down. The cougar was a 90-pound male, 2 or 3 years old.