

# Cougar sighting prompts search

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*The News-Review*

MYRTLE CREEK — Two reports of a cougar walking through a Myrtle Creek neighborhood Thursday prompted police to look for the cat and call a wildlife trapping service.

A cougar was reportedly spotted around 9:30 a.m. on Northeast Simpson Lane, according to Myrtle Creek Police Chief Don Brown.

"A person saw this cougar come off the hill east of Simpson and then walk up Simpson Lane," Brown said. "The person said they saw the cougar the previous morning come off the same hill."

Police were unable to locate the animal, but have taken the reports seriously and called in a trapper with Wildlife Services.

"When we got there, there were two kids playing in two different yards, so we were definitely keeping a close eye on it," Brown said.

He said this was "not a big cat," but is the first such sighting in town this summer. Other reports of cougars in remoter areas have been received, but nothing so close to town.

Michael Burrell of Wildlife Services said a search for the animal was unsuccessful, and there weren't any signs such as tracks or scat that would indicate a cougar had been in the area.

"We weren't able to confirm

whether it was a mountain lion or not," Burrell said. "We did do some calling in the area — some distress calling — to try to bring in the mountain lion, and there was multiple deer and turkeys in the area that were acting natural... typically when there's a big cat around they tend to look nervous and move out."

Burrell said his office responds to such reports frequently, and that this one was relatively tame compared to some of the other big game calls they've received this year, particularly in the Reedsport and Scottsburg areas.

"There are some recent bear situations I could go over with you where bears have been inside houses in Douglas County," Burrell said. "One in particular I can remember was inside the laundry room when they called."

Burrell said state law requires them to euthanize such bears because they have become too habituated to human communities.

As for the cougar sightings in Myrtle Creek, Burrell said Wildlife Services would return to the area if further reports are received.

"If we do get another sighting ... we'll do our best to respond and see if we can see what people are seeing."

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# Cougars spotted near Winston's Safari Estates

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Three cougar sightings have been reported in the past week in an undeveloped portion of a Winston subdivision, Safari Estates, according to police.

The cougar has been seen near homes in Safari Estates, but was not threatening anyone, Winston Police Chief Scott Gugel said.

It's at least the second time this

month cougars have been reported near populated areas of Douglas County.

Two weeks ago, at least three people reported seeing a cougar around Gaddis Park in Roseburg, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife biologist Tod Lum said no cougars have been found there.

Lum said he didn't want to miss the sightings. But he said large dog tracks have been found in the park, and it was possible witnesses

mistook the dog for a cougar. "My bread-and-butter comment for people is to be informed and aware. Know what to do if you should ever encounter a cougar," Lum said. "Whether in town or out in the woods, the best thing anyone can do is to be educated."

Never approach a cougar, Lum said. Stay calm, face the animal and never run away from it, he said. Looking as large as possible may intimidate the cougar, so Lum sug-

gested stretching out clothing or raising arms.

Most cougars are seen in the early mornings or late at night, so it is especially important to be vigilant during those hours.

Cougar sightings should be reported to 541-440-4471.

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