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Petition Calls For SoCal Mountain Lions To Be Placed On Endangered List

LOS ANGELES (CBSLA) – With their habitats increasingly threatened across Southern California, environmental advocacy groups are demanding that state officials list local mountain lions as an endangered species.

The Center for Biological Diversity (CBD) and the Mountain Lion Foundation announced Tuesday that they have formally petitioned the California Fish and Game Commission (CFGF) to place mountain lions who live in Southern California and on the Central Coast on the California Endangered Species Act.

The petition includes cougars who roam the Santa Monica, San Bernardino, San Gabriel, Santa Ana and Santa Cruz Mountains, along with the Eastern Peninsular Range.

This petition [follows a study released in March](#) which determined that habitat loss, inbreeding and isolation could cause cougar populations in the Santa Monica and Santa Ana mountains to go extinct within the next 50 years.

“Our mountain lions are dying horrible deaths from car collisions and rat poison, and their populations are at risk from inbreeding too,” said CBD biologist Tiffany Yap, the primary author of the petition, wrote in a statement. “Without a clear legal mandate to protect mountain lions from the threats that are killing them and hemming them in on all sides, these iconic wild cats will soon be gone from Southern California.”

Caltrans has long proposed building a wildlife bridge across the 101 Freeway in Agoura Hills that would allow animals to travel between the Santa Monica Mountains and Simi Hills. Meanwhile, conservationists have proposed capturing cougars in the Santa Anas and trucking them across the 15 Freeway so they can breed with other mates who are also isolated on the other side.

At least 18 cougars have been killed on a freeway or road in the Santa Monica Mountains since 2002, according to National Park Service numbers.

Rat poison is also posing a grave threat to mountain lions. Biologists believe [a mountain lion found dead in March](#) in the Santa Monica Mountains likely died of rat poison. Of 22 local mountain lions tested in the Santa Monica Mountains, 21 have showed the presence of rat poison in their systems, NPS reports. Those included a 3-month-old kitten.

Last December, a mountain lion named P-64 [survived the Woolsey Fire only to die a few weeks later](#). Like P-47, tests also revealed he had six different types of anticoagulant rodenticide compounds in his system.

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife [now has three months](#) to decide whether to recommend the petition to the CFCG, who will then vote on it later this year.