

MPG Ranch Field Note
December 9, 2011
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12/7/2011. A mountain lion left tracks in Whaley draw. It was moving south toward Woodchuck creek.



Adult female lion

Coyote



The lion followed the road out of, and across, Whaley. Then it dropped down to Woodchuck creek.



Heading up Woodchuck 500 meters, I encountered many tracks. The ground was heavily disturbed with a well worn trail leading down into the creek bottom.

Encountered lion track here

Carcass with kittens



After a few minutes of cautious scanning, I located a carcass. It was partially covered with snow and leaves. All tracks were isolated to this area, with another well worn path leading away from the carcass toward a Douglas fir with heavy mistletoe at its base. No tracks led out from the cover of mistletoe. It seemed like a perfect spot for a cat nap. Moments later, a squirrel and two chickadees gave alarm calls.





A movement out of the mistletoe revealed a mountain lion kitten. It moved slow and quiet, crouching low to the ground.







A second kitten followed right after.



A few minutes after the two kittens left my view, a third one bolted from cover.

The three kittens eventually moved up hill away from me and out of view. I did not want to chance an encounter with the adult female, being so near to a carcass and her young.

It is not uncommon for a female mountain lion to have 2-3 kittens, but it does suggest that she has provided ample food. They will stay with her for 18-24 months. These kittens were born this year and may have a tough winter ahead.

