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Spring 2011

Review of *Cougar: Ecology and Conservation*. Edited by Maurice Hornocker and Sharon Negri.

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Gilad, Oranit, "Review of *Cougar: Ecology and Conservation*. Edited by Maurice Hornocker and Sharon Negri." (2011). *Great Plains Research: A Journal of Natural and Social Sciences*. 1166.

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Cougar: Ecology and Conservation. Edited by Maurice Hornocker and Sharon Negri. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010. xiv + 306 pp. Maps, illustrations, figures, tables, appendices, references, index. \$49.00 cloth.

Historically, cougars (mountain lions, pumas, or panthers) had an extensive distribution throughout the Americas, ranging from British Columbia in North America to Patagonia at South America's tip. As a native species and a large obligate carnivore, the cougar has a complex relationship with the human population in the Americas. This current book—the product of multiple authors, all with hands-on experience in cougar work, and written in a clear manner appropriate to most audiences—is an important addition to the scientific literature in the field of carnivore conservation in the New World.

As a product of many authors, *Cougar: Ecology and Conservation* reads more like a textbook than a monograph, each author contributing from his or her expertise, an essential element for a volume covering diverse topics. Most chapters provide an instructive overview of the concepts later discussed in depth, an invaluable feature for the nonbiologist. Many of the authors include excellent scientific literature reviews, providing an extensive resource for readers interested in expanding their knowledge or consulting original works mentioned in the chapters.

Part 1 of this four-part book discusses the history of cougars in the Americas as it relates to cougar evolution, human perception of cougars, and the evolution of cougar management. Cougars at the population level are the focus of part 2, with chapters covering populations in North America and two separate chapters offering insights into the current situation in South America. Insights into the

South American populations are particularly valuable to our knowledge of cougar conservation since many studies conducted in South America are published in Spanish and consequently missed by much of the North American scientific community. Part 3 moves from the population level to species and individuals, providing an excellent overview of studies conducted on behavior, social organization, diet and prey selection, cougar–prey relationships, and competition with other carnivores.

The final part investigates conservation approaches in cougar management and the challenges faced as a consequence of increasing human expansion and its pressures on natural cougar habitat. In addition to examining the importance of cougars as part of the ecosystem and their behavior with and without human presence, this section also reviews the politics involved in making decisions regarding cougar management and the history of changing views within both the general public and government.

Since it deals with ecological concepts and practicalities involved in large carnivore management in relation to the complexities of today's human population, *Cougar: Ecology and Conservation* provides a valuable resource for those interested in large carnivores in general as well as the cougar in particular. **Oranit Gilad**, *Balanced Ecology Inc.*, Kempner, Texas.