



Friends of Griffith Park

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friendsofgriffithpark.org

April 2, 2020

Mr. Eric Sklar, President
California Fish and Game Commission
1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1320
Sacramento, CA 95814
(via email: fgc@fgc.ca.gov)

RE: Support for the petition to list Southern California and Central Coast mountain lions as threatened under the California Endangered Species Act

Dear President Sklar and Commissioners:

We have examined the petition to list, as threatened, certain mountain lion subpopulations under the California Endangered Species Act (CESA). We have concluded that the thresholds for listing are sufficiently met and request your authority to recognize six subpopulations as an Evolutionary Significant Unit (ESU). We concur that this action is justified per the application, since:

- A “threatened species” is one “likely to become an endangered species in the foreseeable future in the absence of the special protection and management efforts.”
- An animal is an “endangered species” when it is “in serious danger of becoming extinct throughout all, or a significant portion, of its range due to one or more causes, including loss of habitat, overexploitation, predation, competition, or disease.”

We have seen first-hand the rapid path toward local extinction for mountain lions in our own Santa Monica Mountains over the last decade. Habitat fragmentation, supplemented by vehicle strikes, depredation kills, anticoagulant poisonings, and other stressors are the main human-induced culprits. Here, inbreeding is well-documented and hastens the demise of a population that otherwise shares open space with a large human population.

We are frightened that the loss of mountain lions could be devastating not only because we would lose them, but that the ecosystem as a whole would suffer in its composition and its biodiversity. We should do everything we can to not disturb the natural food chain and balance which has evolved over eons. The impact of losing a top predator could be weighty on an otherwise healthy ecosystem.

By recognizing the proposed ESU under CESA, protection may afford this majestic species improved habitat connectivity and more stringent depredation regulations in the future. Protection will also encourage ambitions for safe passage under or across roads which, beyond improving gene flow, will improve the safety of our roads.

We praise the Center for Biological Diversity and the Mountain Lion Foundation, along with the support of many others, for executing this petition. We hope the California Fish and Game Commission will move forward toward listing Southern California and Central Coast mountain lions as an Evolutionary Significant Unit.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Gerry H.", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Gerry Hans
VP, Science & Conservation

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Marian Dodge", written in a cursive style.

Marian Dodge
President