



Saskatchewan cougars have received minimal attention due to an assumption of having few cats in the province. (Photo: Paul Martins)

USask researcher asks public to report cougar evidence

A University of Saskatchewan (USask) researcher is building a database to uncover the whereabouts of the secretive and elusive prairie cougar.

By UNIVERSITY COMMUNICATIONS

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As part of the **Prairie Cougar Research Project** (<https://skcougars.ca/>), Tammie Windsor—project lead and graduate student in the USask College of Arts and Science—is asking the public to share their observations of cougar evidence within the province.

“I will be collecting reports for the duration of the project—for 2.5 years. This can include recent and historical evidence of sightings, photos, videos, scat, tracks, injured or dead animals from cougar predation, and carcasses of cougars,” said Windsor.

The project database is created from the date and location of each report for georeferencing onto a map. Windsor will use the information to analyze population distribution, abundance, habitat selection, and other ecological factors.

She said the success of the project heavily relies on the public to report their observations.

According to Windsor, despite extensive research on cougars throughout North America, Saskatchewan cougars have received minimal attention due to an assumption of having few cats. An increase of reports from the public and accounts of GPS-collared cats travelling through the province alludes to a larger population than originally suspected.

“This baseline study could serve as a jumping off point for more technical research once we know the location and abundance of cougars throughout the province,” said Windsor. “This project would link the research together from other provinces on how cougars are utilizing the landscape.”

The Prairie Cougar Research Project is sanctioned and sponsored by the USask Department of Biology’s Animal Population Ecology Lab. The project supervisor is Dr. Philip McLoughlin (PhD), professor in the USask College of Arts and Science.

To report evidence of a cougar sighting within Saskatchewan, please contact Tammie Windsor at sk.cougars@usask.ca (<mailto:sk.cougars@usask.ca>) or 306-713-3639. You can also fill out a [survey here](https://www.surveymonkey.ca/r/SKcougars) (<https://www.surveymonkey.ca/r/SKcougars>).

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