



STATE OF CONNECTICUT  
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June 8, 2011

## P R E S S R E L E A S E

### **DEP Investigating Sightings of Large Cat in Greenwich**

The Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) today announced it is cooperating with the Town of Greenwich Police Department to investigate recent sightings of a large cat in the King Street area of Greenwich. Based on photographs taken of the animal and other evidence it appears that the animal is a mountain lion that has been held in captivity and was released or escaped. There is no native population of mountain lions in Connecticut and the eastern mountain lion has been declared extinct by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Anyone that sees this animal should not approach it and immediately call the local police and the DEP 24-hour Emergency Phone Line at 860-423-3333.

“Although there is no population of mountain lions in the Northeast, we believe that this animal may very likely be a mountain lion that has been held in captivity and either escaped or was released,” said DEP Deputy Commissioner Susan Frechette. “Our current information, which we will continue to evaluate, is based on hazy photographs we have seen and the size of the paw prints that have been left behind.”

There have been reported sightings of mountain lions in Connecticut in the past but none have been confirmed. The eastern mountain lion was declared extinct in March of this year by the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service so if this animal is confirmed to be a mountain lion it will be one that has been held in captivity. The closest confirmed population of mountain lions is in Missouri.

The DEP will continue to work closely with local officials to attempt to determine the identity of the animal. Anyone spotting the animal should contact local authorities and the DEP. Anyone having knowledge of where the animal may have come from can also anonymously contact the DEP at 860424-3333 with the information.