

# The Monroe Monitor and Valley News

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## Bear, Elk and Cougar Sighted in Monroe area

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**Guest Writer**

Residents have recently reported sightings of black bears and a possible young cougar in Monroe and Sultan. The Snohomish County Sheriff's office confirms that there have been a number of black bear sightings north of Monroe and in Sultan. The Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife (WSDFW) says that bear sightings are on the rise and advise Monroe residents to take precautions against attracting bears and other wildlife.

Homeowners in the Mount Forest area south of Monroe have also reported animal sightings. Cathy Beam of 161st Ave SE relates an encounter with a black bear outside her home on October 6:

"We were in our family room and heard some noises," said Beam. "At first, we thought it was our cat upstairs running around. My husband then realized it was coming from outside. He went out the back door and there was the bear trying to get into the garbage pail. He or she had dragged it away a bit. We had bite marks and lots of bear slobber on the lid. My husband scared the bear and he went away into the woods. It was a very large bear. We both saw it and my husband thought it was around 200 pounds."

In the same area three days earlier, Lyndsi Stickle reported to the WSDFW Mill Creek branch that she sighted a cougar weighing about 40 or 50 pounds. According to Fish and Wildlife, the size and ringed tail seen on the cougar indicates that it is a juvenile and its presence indicates that the mother may also be in the vicinity.

Randy Lambert of the WSDFW says that the bears are wandering out of their mountain habitats because the wet spring has affected the availability of the berries that the bears feed on; forcing them to forage closer to populated areas. Lambert says that as more berries ripen and the weather cools, the bears will return to higher elevations. In the meantime, the public can expect more bear sightings for the next couple of weeks and residents are advised to keep garbage cans and composters firmly sealed, clean up fallen fruit in gardens, and not to leave livestock feed or other food out in the open.

Lambert added that if you do see a bear, don't be surprised. There are 30,000 in Washington.

For more information on what to do if you encounter a bear or other animal, visit <http://wdfw.wa.gov/living/>