

Mountain Lion P-22 euthanized following health evaluation

December 27, 2022



After receiving a comprehensive medical evaluation, CDFW has received a clear picture of the mountain lion P-22's medical condition and overall health. He had several severe injuries and chronic health problems. Based on these factors, compassionate euthanasia under general anesthesia was unanimously recommended by the medical team at San Diego Zoo Safari Park, and CDFW officials made the decision to do so on Saturday, Dec. 17.

P-22 received a thorough diagnostic evaluation by the Safari Park's wildlife health team, under general anesthesia. The extensive evaluation included a physical exam, organ function tests, infectious disease screening, ultrasonography and computed tomography (CT) scans of the skull, chest and abdomen.

The results of these tests and screenings showed significant trauma to the mountain lion's head, right eye and internal organs, confirming the suspicion of recent injury, such as a vehicle strike. The trauma to his internal organs would require invasive surgical repair.

The examination also revealed significant pre-existing illnesses, including irreversible kidney disease, chronic weight loss, extensive parasitic skin infection over his entire body and localized arthritis, all of which have led to the unfortunate deterioration in P-22's overall condition.

P-22's advanced age, combined with chronic, debilitating, life-shortening conditions and the clear need for extensive long-term veterinary intervention left P-22 with no hope for a positive outcome. His poor condition indicated that he may also have had additional underlying conditions not yet fully characterized by diagnostics.

The Safari Park wildlife care team consists of six veterinarians with additional board certification in zoologic medicine. Additionally, four veterinary specialists (board certifications in ophthalmology, radiology and surgery) were consulted.

CDFW is not seeking information on a vehicle collision. This situation is not the fault of P-22, nor of a driver who may have hit him. Rather, it is an eventuality that arises from habitat loss and fragmentation, and it underscores the need for thoughtful construction of wildlife crossings and well-planned spaces that provide wild animals room to roam.

On Thursday, Dec. 8, CDFW announced their intent to capture the world-famous mountain lion and bring him in for a health evaluation. On Monday Dec. 12, P-22 was captured by CDFW and National Park Service and brought in for evaluation. On Dec. 13, CDFW issued a FAQ document about P-22 and held a media briefing to provide an update on his condition.

CDFW wishes to thank our many partners. This has been a difficult journey for all of us. None more so than the dedicated staff who have been caring for him over this week, the biologists who have studied his incredible life, and the many compassionate individuals who have been his neighbors and followed his travails.

Mountain lion P-22 has had an extraordinary life and captured the hearts of the people of Los Angeles and beyond. The most difficult, but compassionate choice was to respectfully minimize his suffering and stress by humanely ending his journey.