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The Cougar on Cape Breton About three years ago, Robert MacKay saw something he had never seen before. He was in a field in the Big Baddeck area, sitting waiting for a chance to shoot a deer. It was about 5 o'clock in the evening and there was plenty of light. An animal walked out of the woods, up from the river. It was walking across the field, then saw MacKay and stopped. He fired at it and it just stood there looking at him. He fired again and still the animal did not move. It was a solid brownish color and had a long tail pretty near to the ground, with a curl at the end of it. It was very bold. It was not as high as a deer but at least as long. MacKay told people about the animal but most of them did not believe him. Then, just a year ago his wife, Barbara, happened to look out the window in time to see the tail end of a big animal jumping the fence • a long-tailed big cat. Buddy MacLeod is a Forest Technician, Dept. of Lands and Forests, Every year, once the snow goes and before the vegetation is thick, they do a dead deer survey along certain streams. Deer tend to come to streams when they are dying of starvation. Buddy found the torn apart remnants of a deer and unfamiliar scats (animal droppings). These scats were segmented, each segment about one and one-half inches long. The scats of lynx are not segmented. "I've seen a lot," Buddy told us, "but I never saw one like this. Every bone of that deer was crunched right up. There were even teeth marks on the skull. Lynx might break some bones but he does not go around methodically breaking them all. And most animals are clean • won't defecate in its eating area. These droppings were right in among the hair." Dr. MacMillan of Baddeck was on Crowdis Mountain, about 3 years ago. It was summer, no time to smoke in the woods, so he was sitting in his car having a cigarette before going down a trail to meet a certain brook. And up along the trail he planned to go down came a big animal. "I had no idea what it was at the time. I knew it wasn't a wildcat or lynx because all four legs were the same length. These legs seemed short, all the same size • but quite large and powerful. Powerful legs. It was quite thick in the body all the way through. The hair was probably the same color as a deer. And the color went down all the way to the paws. I was 30-40 feet from it. It came right at me, but as it neared the car it edged away. Once in the woods it started to run, leaping deadfalls. Graceful leaps like a lion. I was so excited I forgot to notice the tail. I made a trip to Shubenacadie. They had a male and a female. I knew right away it was what I had seen. A cougar." As the evidence slowly accumulates, it seems clear that the least known native wild animal of eastern North America, that animal known as the Cougar, Puma, Panther, Painter, Catamount, Mountain Lion, Brown Tiger, Varmint, Sneak-cat, Red Tiger, Silver Lion, Purple Panther, Deer-killer, Indian Devil, Mountain Devil, Mountain Demon, Mountain Screamer, King-cat • is not extinct. Moreover, he is one of the mammals of Cape Breton Island. We would like to hear from anyone who has seen this animal, or its tracks, or any other evidence of its existence on Cape Breton.

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