

Aromas mountain lion spotted

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The Aromas mountain lion, thought to be responsible for two attacks on horses last month, was spotted today stalking a pony in the same area where the June attacks took place.

Tony Bravo, who lives on Seely Road, said he saw his neighbor's pony moving "faster than normal" shortly after 9 a.m. "I looked up and there it was."

He called Lisa Readel, owner of the pony, which she says is 40 years old. She came out and fired a shotgun blast in the air.

The cougar "just went up into the hills, taking his time," Bravo said.

After tracking the cat with

his binoculars, Bravo lost sight of it, but now has his VCR set up to record any future sightings.

Readel said it was peculiar for a nocturnal animal to be out in broad daylight stalking prey.

However, Bruce Elliott, district supervisor for wildlife in the state Fish and Game Department, disagrees.

Many people think cats only hunt at night, but "they are fortuitous hunters," he said. "They take action when the opportunity arises."

And cougars, like all felines, are curious, he added. "They will try anything at least once."

The Aromas lion has been in the area at least three times, and Elliott said that although cats have routes they follow,

they are territorial, not migratory.

"Obviously Aromas is in the territory of at least one animal and it will continue to show up," he said.

Unless someone kills it. But unless livestock is killed, or there is a real threat proved to the Fish and Game Department, Elliott said no one can legally shoot the animal. Someone must obtain a permit to do so.

And for those who think the lion is a threat to humans, Elliott said they pose no danger. "Most people can spend a good part of their life outdoors and never see a cougar.

"But a cougar will see them," he added, "and will generally avoid them."