

Animals

Mountain lion seen near UCSC's Porter College

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SANTA CRUZ — A mountain lion was sighted Tuesday at UC Santa Cruz, prompting officials to post warnings near Porter College.

The alert came as students prepared for the first day of fall classes.

Two maintenance workers said they saw the animal in the meadow behind the college in the early afternoon, according to Deb White, the university's animal control officer.

One of the witnesses saw the mountain lion running into some bushes and then deer running away, White said.

Authorities searched the area, but found no sign of the animal.

They do not believe there is any threat to students or staff, but wanting to be careful they posted several warning notices, White said.

Several fliers were stapled to trees and taped to light posts behind Porter College's "B" dormitory.

Officials will be passing out addition-

al notices to alert residents.

The effort is a continuation of a campaign that began after a deer apparently killed by a mountain lion was discovered last winter.

Students began arriving on campus last weekend with fall classes starting Thursday.

"I'm not really worried about it," said Brandi Hugo, 19, who is beginning her second year at UCSC. "I have no big problem with them. Most of the time they don't attack."

Hugo said she saw a deer carcass last year on campus that appeared to have been killed by a mountain lion.

Several new students learned of the news late Tuesday afternoon.

Keenan Booker, an 18-year-old from Oakland, said the resident assistant for his dorm floor told him about the sighting.

"He said, 'You guys may not want to go on night hikes,'" Booker said.

The area where the mountain lion

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was seen is near a natural reserve, according to White.

Last year, one was sighted on campus near the UC Arboretum.

In February, a deer carcass was found near the health center. The bite wounds at the base of the skull marked it as a lion kill, according

to officials.

Mountain lion sightings are becoming more common across the state, apparently because humans are pushing further into their territory, White said.

There is also a large deer population in the meadow behind Porter College, White said.

Several could be seen walking

near where the notices were posted.

The mountain lion, she said, did not show any signs of aberrant behavior to alarm officials.

Lions usually avoid human contact, White said.

She said officials would not hunt for the animal unless it becomes dangerous to people.