

# Residents believe lion is in their area

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**BOULDER CREEK** — Neighbors in the Deer Creek Road area north of town are worried that a mountain lion has been killing their dogs, but state fish and game wardens said there isn't enough evidence to prove it.

Boulder Creek resident Daniel Nordeen said his dog, Buddy, was killed June 2 by what he believes is a mountain lion he spotted earlier in the day.

Earlier this month, said Nordeen, his neighbor's dog was killed and another one was injured. A similar attack occurred in November, said Nordeen.

"We know there are always mountain lions around here, the issue is that one of them is on a rampage," said Nordeen. "The bottom line is somebody's going to get hurt. ... The thing's just not going away."

Lt. Dennis Baldwin of the state Department of Fish and Game,

said it's unlikely a dog would have survived a mountain lion attack. In addition, a warden who searched the neighborhood after Nordeen reported the attacks could not find any tracks or other evidence of a mountain lion's presence.

"A mountain lion is a very efficient killer," said Baldwin, who supervises wardens in Santa Cruz and Santa Clara counties. "If a dog survives, it's probably not a mountain lion."

In addition, the attack usually does not involve substantial mauling injuries, which were present in the cases cited by Nordeen. Mountain lions usually snap the necks of their prey, he said.

"It very easily could be something else," said Baldwin, including raccoons, which he said are "very aggressive attackers."

But Baldwin could not rule out the possibility of a mountain lion, and he emphasized that peo-



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Deer Creek residents wonder what is attacking dogs in the area. This lion was photographed in Colorado.

ple whose pets are killed by apparent wild animals should call the Department of Fish and Game and ask for a warden to analyze the remains.

"We know there are mountain lions in Santa Cruz County ... but we also know there are dogs running around who do attack each other," said Baldwin.

Nordeen said he doesn't have the money to hire a tracker, even

if he could get permission from the state to hunt a mountain lion, which are protected animals. He hopes the game wardens will try to find more evidence to prove or disprove his mountain lion theory.

"It's terrorizing everybody," said Nordeen. "Once they start eating things, they don't care what it is. If I had a kid, I'd move."