

County's Cougars Safe From Hunt

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MOUNTAIN LIONS in Santa Cruz County will not be part of a proposed hunt approved by the state fish and game commission two weeks ago.

Although extreme southern Santa Cruz County is included, a department official said there are no cougars in the area to hunt. The tiny population of mountain lions in northern Santa Cruz and southern San Mateo counties — possibly as few as a dozen — would not support hunting.

Statewide, 190 permits will be issued sometime later this year. An undetermined number of those will be issued to hunters in Monterey County, particularly in Big Sur, which supports a "good lion population," according to state officials.

Radical environmental groups have already come up with a scheme to



American Wildlife Rescue Service's Jeanne Milewski is one person saddened by the recent cougar hunt approved by the state.

battle the mountain lion hunters by stuffing the ballot box of the "lion-hunt permit lottery." Hunting opponents would pay \$5 for a chance to get a lion permit (and \$75 if they actually got one), and then simply not use it, thereby sparing a cougar's life for at least a year. •