

Book Review

MANITOBA'S BIG CAT

Manitoba's Big Cat: The story of the Cougar in Manitoba. Robert E. Wrigley and Robert W. Nero. 1982. Manitoba Museum of Man and Nature, Winnipeg, Canada, 68 pages. \$6.50 (paper).

Public observations are the major source of circumstantial evidence used in this book on cougar occurrences in Manitoba. Based on 436 reported sightings and 1 actual specimen over the past century, the text establishes the cougar as one of Manitoba's rarest mammals.

The authors, in a popular style of writing, use individual accounts coupled with convincing biological arguments to prove the existence of cougar in the Province. The first three chapters cover historical evidence and provide details of the single specimen, taken in 1973 near the Provincial capital Winnipeg. Other chapters cover breeding activities, black (melanistic) cougars, vocalizations and other behaviour, food habits, preferred habitats, and speculations about the animal's future.

That cougars have existed in Manitoba is established, but there is only weak scientific evidence for a constant or increasing population of the big cats.

The book contains excellent photographs of Idaho cougars by Maurice C. Hornocker and is beautifully illustrated by Saskatchewan artist Dwayne Harty.

C. C. Dixon
Manitoba Department
Winnipeg, Manitoba