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Rehabilitated Mountain Lion Returns to Wild in Santa Ana Mountains *Juvenile male without mom roamed residential areas in Mission Viejo before capture.*

Ramona — A juvenile mountain lion who spent two weeks at San Diego Humane Society’s Ramona Wildlife Center under the care of the organization’s Project Wildlife team, was released back into the wild by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) late Thursday, July 29, 2021.

The 1-year-old sub-adult male lion arrived on July 13, 2021 after being captured by the CDFW in coordination with Mission Viejo Animal Services in Mission Viejo. There had been repeated reports of sightings in the Orange County neighborhood, leading wildlife officials to capture the mountain lion and bring him to San Diego Humane Society’s Ramona Wildlife Center for evaluation.

There, the Project Wildlife veterinary team performed a full exam under sedation that included lab work, X-rays and a dental exam. The patient was treated for parasites, given fluids and monitored by the care team to ensure he was ready to survive on his own in a more suitable area within his home territory.

San Diego Humane Society’s Project Wildlife team in Ramona is the first in California to work under the direction of CDFW to rehab mountain lions with the intention of releasing them back into the wild. “Mountain lions are in many communities in Southern California, but it is important to remember they need to remain wild at heart and not get comfortable around people — for everyone’s safety,” said Christine Barton, director of operations & wildlife rehabilitation at San Diego Humane Society’s Ramona Campus. “They are special predators and we are proud to have an expert team trusted by the state of California in this pilot program to care for the species here at the Ramona Wildlife Center.”

San Diego Humane Society’s Project Wildlife is the primary resource for wild animal rehabilitation and conservation education in San Diego County. Each year, SDHS gives nearly 13,000 injured, orphaned and sick wild animals a second chance. In 2020, SDHS announced a new Ramona Campus, where they specialize in caring for native apex predators and birds of prey, including hawks, owls, eagles, coyotes, bears, bobcats and, under special pilot authorization, mountain lions.

Photos and video clips for media use can be downloaded here: <https://bit.ly/375oVev>

Suggested Tweet: A juvenile mountain lion who spent 2 weeks at @sdhumane's Ramona Wildlife Center under the care of the #ProjectWildlife team, has been released back into the wild in the Santa Ana mountains. The lion was captured and released by @CaliforniaDFW.

About San Diego Humane Society

San Diego Humane Society’s scope of social responsibility goes beyond adopting animals. We offer programs that strengthen the human-animal bond, prevent cruelty and neglect, provide medical care, educate the community and serve as a safety net for all pet families. Serving San Diego County since 1880, San Diego Humane Society has campuses in El Cajon, Escondido, Oceanside, Ramona and San Diego. For more information, please visit sdhumane.org.

