

Officials seek person who trapped mountain lion

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Photo by Photos By Thomas Cooper / Special To The Rocky

An injured mountain lion, his leg trapped, awaits rescue by the Colorado Division of Wildlife.



Division of Wildlife personnel carry a tranquilized mountain lion to safety.

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State wildlife officials are seeking information on someone who set an illegal leg-hold trap that snared a mountain lion in Jefferson County on Wednesday.

Rangers drug-darted the cat in Waterton Canyon after a resident reported the cougar's front paw was caught in a trap anchored with wire to a long piece of wood, said Thomas Cooper, a freelance photographer who captured the drama for the *Rocky*.

"It had really gotten tangled up," Cooper said.

Colorado Division of Wildlife investigators are urging anyone with information about the outlaw trapper to contact DOW at 303-291-7227.

"Someone did illegally set that trap in the canyon," said Jennifer Churchill, a spokeswoman for DOW. "If anyone knows who set that trap, we'd certainly love to hear from them."

Wildlife officials removed the trap and were monitoring the big cat in hopes that it can lope back into the wild. Churchill said they would probably release her Wednesday night or this morning.

"It looks like an older female, 12 years old or older," Churchill said. "She's kind of skinny," which isn't unusual as cats age and their teeth become worn from pouncing on prey.

"But she is expected to recover from the trap. Animals can walk away from those leg-hold traps," Churchill said.

"So they're going to give her a little bit of time and see how she does when she gets up and starts moving around. We are expected at this point just to release her," she said.