

Michael Stangl, M.S. Thesis Candidate



My name is Michael Stangl, and I hail from Austin, Texas. An appreciation for the outdoors was instilled in me at an early age, and I spent my childhood exploring the Texas Hill Country. As I got older, my explorations took me further from the city and deeper into the wilderness, from the mountains of Montana to the canyons of Utah. After a summer spent in the Yukon Territories with the National Outdoor Leadership School I returned to Texas and enrolled at Sul Ross, where I obtained my Bachelor's of Science in Conservation Biology. Since moving to Alpine I have volunteered on quail research projects, assisted in aerial pronghorn surveys, worked as an intern for Texas Parks & Wildlife at the Black Gap WMA, studied skunks in Big Bend National Park, and was granted the opportunity to work with the Borderlands Research Institute on their mountain lion research projects in the Big Bend and Davis Mountains. I will be continuing my study of

mountain lions in the Davis Mountains as I work towards my Masters of Science.

Thesis Project: Ecosystem Services Provided by Mountain Lion Predation in the Davis Mountains

The mountain lion (*Puma concolor*) is an apex predator in the unique sky-island ecosystem of the Davis Mountains in the Trans-Pecos region of west Texas. Though apex predators are typically associated with the top-down effects in trophic cascades, the inter-specific relationships that actually occur within complex food-web ecologies are less understood and less recognized. The carrion left behind at carnivore kill sites provide an important resource for the scavenging community, thus creating an essential link between the dominant carnivore and the lower trophic levels. My objective is to assess the intricate structure of the scavenging community associated with the carrion remnants of mountain lion kills via the utilization of remotely placed game cameras at kill sites. An understanding of the relationship between predator and scavenger allows for a comprehensive appreciation of the complexities of food-web ecology.

