

'Huge cat' spotted by resident

By **LISATALLYN**
Staff Writer

It's baaack!

Just a little over a year after a local man spotted a "big-ass cat" that looked a lot like a cougar on Ninth Line, another area resident reports he nearly hit a big cat with his SUV in the same area.

David Wright of Georgetown said about 8:45 p.m. Wednesday (March 28) he was heading up Ninth Line with his wife Tanya and their kids in the car when he had to slam on his brakes about a kilometre north of Steeles Ave. because the animal ran across the road in front of him.

Wright managed to stop before hitting the grayish-coloured animal he said was hood-height and heading east.

"It was no little kitty cat, no coyote, no deer," said Wright, who couldn't believe what he was seeing. "It was either a cougar or a puma—a huge cat, not a little pet, not unless you're David Copperfield.

"This was a big cat, with a big tail, and everything on it," said Wright. A courier, Wright said he's hit both a deer and a coyote with his truck in the past, and he knows the difference between those animals and a cat.

He said what he nearly hit was a "monster cat, bigger than any dog I've ever seen." It was a like a cheetah, with weight on it, he added.

Last February, Tom Prong of Georgetown said the cat he saw running across

Ninth Line was also heading east.

"I was more than a little shocked. I was freaked out to see such a large animal," said Prong at the time.

Wright, who moved to Georgetown in December, was surprised to hear about the previous sighting.

Both Prong and Wright reported the incidents to Halton Police. Police responded to the area Wednesday night but couldn't find anything, said Sgt. Dave Cross.

Wright also called the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) to report the cat.

At publication time no one was available to comment from the MNR, but last year after Prong saw what he believed was a cougar John Pisapio, a wildlife biologist with the MNR, said he had no confirmed evidence there were cougars in the Halton Hills area, but said there have been reports of sightings here.

Pisapio said there were a couple of reports of cougar sighting in Halton Hills in 2010, but no confirmed evidence of an actual cougar, and over the last several years there have been reported cougar sightings in Halton Region.

And a recently released study by a provincial wildlife research scientist Rick Rosatte cites a body of evidence in recent decades confirming cougars are living in Ontario and eastern North America.

Among the study's findings is almost 500 pieces of evidence gathered between 1991 and 2010 "that confirms the presence of cougars in Ontario."

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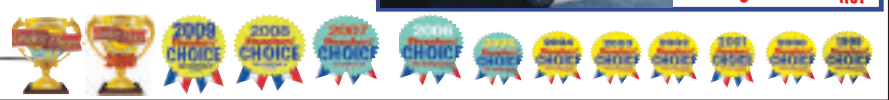
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