

Arizona state employee fired over jaguar capture

March 20 2010

(AP) -- The Arizona Game and Fish Department has fired an employee based on results of an internal investigation into the capture and death of what was the only known wild jaguar in the U.S.

Officials said Friday that 40-year-old Thornton W. Smith was a field biologist and had been with the agency 12 years.

He was involved in the placement and monitoring of traps used in a [black bear](#) and mountain lion research project that resulted in the initial capture of the [jaguar](#) called "Macho B."

The cat was found snared in a Game and Fish trap on Feb. 18, 2009. It was recaptured due to [health problems](#) and euthanized less than two weeks later.

Game and Fish officials say Smith acknowledged that he misled federal investigators regarding facts surrounding the jaguar's original capture.

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