

UPDATE PANTHER #61

Florida panther #61 recently gave birth to a single male kitten in Everglades National Park. Number 61 is a single kitten herself of TX 108 making her an F1. The kitten #61 just had is now considered an F2 (second generation). Number 61 had a rough beginning to her life in Everglades National Park. At approximately 1 year of age during a routine recollaring she was found to be in bad shape. She was severely dehydrated, anemic, and her nose was swollen. One theory is that the resident male in the area got a little rough with her possibly during mating activities. Number 61 was removed at that time and given medical care initially at Miami Metro Zoo, then the vet school in Gainesville, and then recovered at White Oak Plantation. She was released about 2 months later and has done fine ever since. Her recently giving birth is great news to all those who helped in her recovery. We got really lucky in finding her den so quickly. Most panther related activities in ENP are not easy because of the rough terrain and hot weather. We went down to ENP on Monday the 5th to set up the "biologist-in-a-box" (a remote den/radio-collar monitoring device) and pinpoint the den location.

With this device we learned that #61 left her den sometime after 6:00 am the following morning. With this information at hand we proceeded to search for the den site and kitten. We found it after a relatively short search (about 15 minutes). This is pretty good considering that after hurricane Andrew blew through that area the hammocks are a tangled mess of downed trees making it very difficult to move. Also, because of this, there is a multitude of potential denning sites available. But that is why we pinpoint the den while the female is there so we know where to concentrate our search efforts. The kitten was labeled K59 and a transponder was inserted for positive identification later. He was healthy and about 14 days old when we handled him. The tail was not kinked nor was a cowlick present indicating that the genetic restoration program is having the desired effects.