

## **Florida Panther #77 Gives Birth To Three Kittens June 2000**

Florida panther #77 gave birth to three kittens, two males and a female, in early June on the Addition Lands of Big Cypress National Preserve north of I-75. They were about four weeks old when handled on 27 June and their weights ranged from 3 lbs. 13 oz. to 4 lbs. 4 oz. Transponders were inserted and biological data collected. None of the kittens had a kinked tail.



*The third kitten in this litter crawled to the back of the den before we could take a picture*

Finding the kittens in the den was a fairly quick process. However, getting to the den site was a different story entirely. Many of the trails were overgrown making travel virtually impossible from the west. A route from the northeast was later utilized. The trails were generally better from this direction but they didn't get us very close to the den site. We got as close as possible by swamp buggy but were still about half a mile shy of our destination. The hike to the den traversed quite a mix of habitats; prairies, pine lands and cypress swamps which were dry at this time of year.

We filmed our activities at the den using a camera provided by the National Geographic Society for a program they are producing on cougars. For the preservation of the den site and the safety of the kittens, we severely limit the number people at dens. However, we were happy to oblige by doing the filming ourselves with the understanding that we are not professional videographers. Lets hope it's something worthwhile. They are still in the early stages of production but projected that it would air sometime this winter. Be sure to check back for details on when this program will be shown.