



Florida panther #62 continues to impress us with his wide-ranging perambulations. This male panther was born in eastern Collier County just north of Big Cypress National Preserve in September 1996. After his independence in December 1997, the cat dispersed northward. In April 1998, this male became the first panther to be documented crossing the Caloosahatchee River. Over the next 2 months, #62 continued dispersing north, almost reaching Interstate 4 to the west of Orlando. By July 1998, #62 settled into a predictable use area centered around Catfish Creek, Polk County with occasional forays north (even crossing I-4 twice) and east (crossing Florida's Turnpike). Surveys of areas used by #62 have never revealed the presence of any other panthers.

This is not the end of #62's saga because in May 2000, #62 vacated the Catfish Creek area and began pressing east towards Vero Beach. He crossed the turnpike and 441, traveling north along the upper St. John's River until reaching the shores of Lake Washington in Brevard County 17 May. Panther #62 did not push further north along the St. John's river; instead he turned to the south, pausing for about a week near Blue Cypress Lake (6/5- 6/9) in Indian River County. The cat then resumed moving south and west, to the Kissimmee River (6/14), Lake Istokpoga (6/16), and crossing US 27 to the west around 6/20. Panther #62 was located on the Glades/Charlotte County line on 6/23 and has been centering his activities since then in and around Telegraph Swamp. Stay tuned for more on these extraordinary travels! The minimum straight-line distance covered by #62 since May 2000 is over 170 miles.