

Florida Panther Field Note

August – December 2002

Captures

- **FP113?** , **FP114?** . October 23. Florida Panther National Wildlife Refuge. Captures resulted after death of radio-collared mother, FP78, and evidence indicated kittens still alive. Born in April, they are currently 6 months old and unable to survive on their own. They were taken to a private facility for maturation and scheduled for release in the spring/summer 2003.



FWC veterinarian, Dr. Mark Cunningham, carries 6-month-old female FP113 out to a dry location for examination.

- **FP110?** . November 25. Okaloacoochee Slough State Forest. FP110 was first captured last season and fitted with a GPS radio-collar and scheduled for replacement this year. However, FP110's collar was operating on the back-up battery only adding some urgency to the situation. She weighed 93 pounds.
- **FP115?** . 26 November. Okaloacoochee Slough State Forest. Initial capture of this 116-pound female. Captured while FWC panther capture team hunting for FP109? , whose GPS collar has failed (no longer sending a radio signal), in same area.
- **FP82?** . December 6. Okaloacoochee Slough State Forest. FP82's collar had failed a few months prior but was recaptured while searching for FP109? . She was in fine shape at 134 pounds. However, she did bare some lacerations presumably from tackling a hog.
- **FP104?** . December 13. Big Cypress National Preserve, "Addition Lands." This panther was initially captured in April 2001 when 6-7 months old (his mother is presumed to be FP70_{F1} but her collar has failed). During capture he suffered a simple fracture to the right front

leg. Surgery was successful and after 2 months, he was moved to a large pen at White Oak Plantation where he could mature and hone his prey capture skills. He was released on November 28, 2001. Shortly afterward he began displaying normal dispersal movements and has since settled in to an established home range. He weighed 137 pounds at capture indicating he has adjusted well to life as a wild panther.



As you can see by comparing FP104 to the tree climber, Mark Lotz, he has done well in the past year since his release.

Mortalities

- **FP111?** . Sept. 6. Okaloacoochee Slough State Forest, Hendry County. Detected in mortality during routine panther telemetry flight. Died from intraspecific aggression (killed by another panther) by uncollared panther. First captured February 14, 2002 and fitted with GPS radio-collar. Age at capture was estimated 8-10 yrs.
- **FP32?** . September 13. Florida Panther National Wildlife Refuge, Collier County. Detected in mortality during flight. Cause of death was likely malnutrition associated with her advanced age. Potentially related factors include fractures of all 4 canines and a fractured rib and subsequent adhesion of the left upper lung lobe. FP32 was first radio collared in February 1989 when 2-years old. She was 15 when she died.
- **FP112?** . September 13. Big Cypress National Preserve, Bear Island Unit, Collier County. Detected in mortality during flight. Cause of death was intraspecific aggression from uncollared male panther. First captured February 25, 2002 and fitted with GPS radio-collar. Age at death was 3-4 yrs. FP112 had given birth to 2 males in early June. A search of the area was performed but the fate of the kittens, which would have been 3 months old, was undetermined.

- **FP78?** . October 18. Florida Panther National Wildlife Refuge, Collier County. Detected in mortality during flight. Cause of death was intraspecific aggression by uncollared male panther. She was about 5 years old at the time of death. FP78 was first captured in February 1999. She had given birth to her second litter (1male, 3 females) in April 2002. The kittens would currently be about 6 months old. Evidence (tracks and photos) revealed presence of kittens that resulted in the capture of FP113? and FP114? .
- **FP108?** . November 18. Big Cypress National Preserve, Collier County. Detected in mortality during flight. Cause of death not apparent in field but at necropsy hemorrhaging around neck region was observed suggesting an intraspecific encounter. According to the state veterinarian and pathologist performing the necropsy there was no "smoking gun" that they could undoubtedly point to. But the official necropsy report states, "the presumptive cause of death in this case is a traumatic injury to the neck."



TX108, the first Texas cougar removed after fulfilling her obligation to panther recovery, receives the customary exam before transport to captivity. Pictured are field team leader David Shindle, vet Mark Cunningham, and Clack (wagging tail in background).

- **UCFP49?** . November 26. Road-killed, CR858 approximately 1 mile west of SR29, Collier County. Probably hit the previous morning. A transponder chip identified this uncollared panther as "K98", an offspring of FP67 born in May 2001.
- **FP99?** . November 28 (Thanksgiving Day). Road-killed, CR846, about ½ mile north of CR858 (¼ mile north of Collier County Fairgrounds), Collier County. This young male was first captured in January 2001 at just under a year of age. He dispersed north from the Florida Panther National Wildlife Refuge. While looking for a place to call home he ventured into Ft. Myers (crossing I-75 twice) and spent considerable

time near Southwest Regional (Ft. Myers airport) and Florida Gulf Coast University. Most recently he had used portions of Corkscrew Regional Ecosystem Watershed (CREW) lands (Flint Pen Strand and Bird Rookery Swamp) and Audubon's Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary.

Texas Cougar Removals

The Texas cougars (*Puma concolor stanleyana*), introduced for genetic restoration of the Florida panther in 1995, have met their intended quota of offspring assimilated into the panther population. Genetic restoration efforts are on track with an intended 20% introgression level. Only 3 of the original 8 remain and they are all slated for removal to permanent captivity during the 2002-2003 capture season.

- **TX108.** Everglades National Park. Captured November 18 and transported to White Oak Conservation Center, Yulee, FL. TX108 had 2 litters. The first one in 1996 produced FP61? , the second one in 1998 resulted in FP95? . Both of these kittens have produced litters of their own as well.