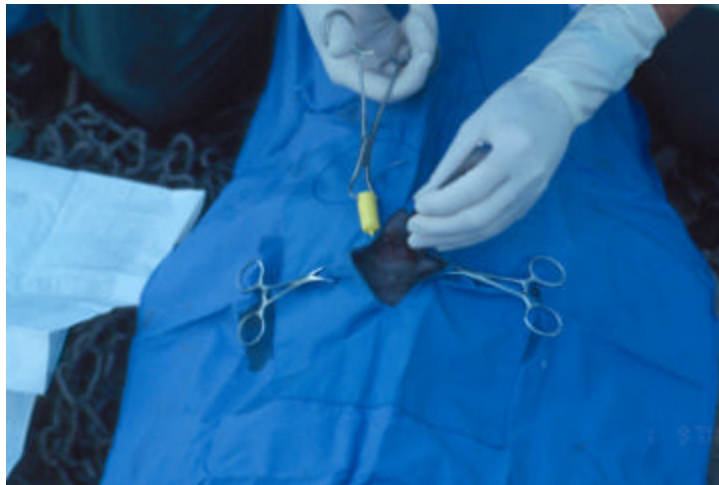


**FWC Panther Capture Activities
Big Cypress Seminole Indian Reservation
10-14 January 2000**

The capture team focused their capture efforts during the week of 10-14 January on the Big Cypress Seminole Indian Reservation (BCSIR). The primary objectives of our capture efforts were to: 1) capture TX101, replace her radiocollar, and surgically replace her contraceptive implant; 2) capture and radiocollar FP#73_{F1}, whose radiocollar had fallen off in October 1999. Not only were we successful in achieving these goals, but we also added two new panthers to our radiocollared population. The following is a brief summary of these captures:

TX101 (10 January) - We needed to capture TX101 in order to change her radiocollar and implant her with a new subcutaneous contraceptive. TX101 was implanted previously with a subcutaneous contraceptive in 1997 because she had reached her maximum reproductive contribution as defined by the Genetic Restoration Plan. TX101 has produced four offspring (65_{F1}, 66_{F1}, 73_{F1}, 75_{F1}) from two litters. Three of these offspring (66_{F1}, 73_{F1}, 75_{F1}) have been recruited into the panther population.

We were able to locate TX101 by ground telemetry in the BCSIR Game Pen and found her to be in suitable habitat for capture. After she was initially treed, TX101 jumped and treed two more times before she could be safely immobilized with the dart gun. TX101 weighed 118 lbs and appeared in good health. TX101's old contraceptive implant was removed and successfully replaced with a new one.



FP73_{F1} (14 January) - While the capture team was occupied with the work-up of TX101, Roy McBride continued to work the dogs in the Game Pen with the hopes of encountering #73_{F1}. Because #73_{F1}'s radiocollar had fallen off in October 1999 (11 months after her capture in November 1998), Roy had to hunt for her as he would any other uncollared panther. However, because we were able to obtain 11 months of radio locations prior to her collar loss, we did know that she frequented the Game Pen.

Just as we completed our handling of TX101, Roy informed us by radio that the

dogs had treed both an uncollared female panther and an uncollared male panther. Because it was likely that the uncollared female panther was #73_{F1}, we decided to focus our efforts on her. There was no way to tell whether the adult female panther looking down at us from the large oak was #73_{F1}. However, once she was safely immobilized, a quick scan with the transponder reader confirmed the presence of the transponder placed in #73_{F1} as a kitten in October 1995. Number 73_{F1} weighed 112 lbs and appeared in good health.



FP80 and FP81 (14 January) - Following the captures of TX101 and #73_{F1} we continued to survey the BCSIR for uncollared panthers. Earlier in the week, we trailed an uncollared male panther that likely left the Game Pen on Monday night. It was possible that this was the panther treed the previous day with #73_{F1}. However, the dogs were no longer able to trail the panther once it had walked along a heavily traveled dirt road.

On Friday, Roy and his dogs encountered the fresh trail of a male and female panther traveling together. It was not long before the dogs split up and treed both uncollared panthers less than 30 yards apart. Treeding two panthers at the same time is an uncommon occurrence and the fact that this was the second time in one week made it even more special. Panthers spend the majority of their lives as solitary animals whose only social interactions with their own kind occur when they are breeding, when the females are raising kittens, or when males fight over territory. It was very likely that we interrupted a reproductive pairing between the two panthers.

We chose to capture the female panther first because the low height at which she was treed made it the safest of the two captures. However, once the female was safely immobilized we were able to proceed with the capture of the male panther. The approximately 4-year-old adult female panther (#80) was in good health and weighed 94 lbs. She possessed both a kinked tail and a cowlick. The adult male (#81), also approximately 4 years old and in good health, weighed 141 lbs. Number 81 also exhibited morphological traits common in the Florida panther population. He possessed a kinked tail, cowlick, and one undescended testicle. We allowed the panthers to recover together



and only time will tell whether the breeding bout that we interrupted will result in a litter from #80 in approximately three months. Also, future telemetry locations may provide evidence whether #81 was the same male that we trailed from the Game Pen three days earlier.

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