

## **Panther Capture Activities 7-11 February 2000**

During the week of 7-11 February, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission's panther capture team succeeded in capturing and radio collaring kittens from TX106 and #73<sub>F1</sub>. Unfortunately, during this week panther #80 was struck and killed by a car.

### **Capture of Panther #83<sub>F1</sub>**

On Tuesday, February 8<sup>th</sup> we decided to make another attempt to capture the female kitten of TX106. We began the morning locating TX106 in the area of Fakahatchee Strand State Preserve where we had aborted a capture attempt the previous Friday (**see previous Field Note**). Mark and I were fortunate enough to locate the signal of TX106 along the portion of Jane's Scenic Drive where she had crossed on Friday. However, with the increasing strength of TX106's radio signal it soon became evident that she was moving closer and closer to the road. Mark and I decided to take advantage of this opportunity and positioned ourselves along the road so that TX106's signal was between us. In a matter of moments, Mark and I were rewarded with the rare opportunity of seeing a mother and her kitten in the wild. TX106 was obviously aware of my presence and keenly kept an eye from a distance as I slowly crept towards her for a better look. She obviously did not view me as a threat and her curiosity soon faded. Like ghosts disappearing into the swamp, TX106 summoned her bounding kitten and continued across the road. Our sighting of TX106 and her kitten combined with Darrell's sighting from the air four days earlier (**see previous Field Note**) confirmed that TX106 had one surviving kitten from her litter of two last June (**see TX106 Gives Birth**).

In less than an hour, Roy put out his dogs at the spot where Mark and I saw the pair cross Jane's Scenic Drive. After a short chase, the dogs treed TX106. Fortunately, Roy was able to keep TX106 in the tree while at the same time getting the dogs to trail the kitten. Florida panther #83<sub>F1</sub>, as she will be forever known, weighed 50 pounds and appeared healthy. She did not have a kinked tail or a cowlick.

Later that afternoon, Mark returned to Jane's Scenic Drive to determine if TX106 and #83<sub>F1</sub> had reunited. Although they had not yet gotten back together, Mark soon found evidence that the chances were good for an eventual reunion and even found the possible rendezvous point. Not too far from the spot where the cats had entered the road, vultures alerted Mark to a partially consumed deer that was still covered for a return feeding bout. It appears that Mark and I observed TX106 and #83<sub>F1</sub> returning from an early morning breakfast. Sure enough, Darrell's telemetry flight the following morning found the two cats together not too far from the capture site.

### **Panther #80 Killed by Car**

In the late night hours of Wednesday, February 9<sup>th</sup> panther #80 was killed by a vehicle on the Big Cypress Seminole Indian Reservation, not too far from where we captured her four weeks earlier (**see FWC Panther Capture Activities 01/00**). See the

Field Note for more details surrounding #80's death.

### **Capture of Panther #84**

On Friday, February 11<sup>th</sup> we hunted the Big Cypress Seminole Indian Reservation for the kitten of #73<sub>F1</sub>. At the time of #73<sub>F1</sub>'s capture on January 10<sup>th</sup>, Roy had found sign that indicated #73<sub>F1</sub> may have been traveling with a kitten. Three weeks ago Darrell confirmed this hunch when, during the telemetry flight, he observed #73<sub>F1</sub> walking with what appeared to be a year-old kitten. Darrell's aerial observation proved correct when Roy's dogs split up and trailed two separate scents in the direction of #73<sub>F1</sub>'s radio signal. Shortly afterwards the dogs joined up and treed male panther #84. Panther #84 was estimated to be 12 months old, weighed 94 pounds, and appeared in excellent health.



Prepared by David Shindle