

**Florida Panther Field Note**  
**July - September 2001**  
*Prepared by Mark Lotz*

I must apologize for not providing an update lately. I don't dare say that summer is our "slow" season, but it is the time of year when we're not in our daily "capture mode." Consequently, we try to take our vacations and use up some of our comp time that we invariably accumulate throughout the year. That is, of course, when we can schedule it around panther denning events, annual reports, and other such activities. Now that I've made my excuses, let me run down what's happened in the past three months.

**July**

***12 July - Florida panther (FP) #102***

FP 102 was first captured this past capture season on 20 February 2001 on Big Cypress National Preserve (BCNP). At that time she had at least one kitten with her (both had treed at the capture site). It is assumed that that kitten survived and dispersed. FP102 has since given birth to another litter. The den was visited on the 12<sup>th</sup> and 2 male kittens weighing 2 lbs.-11oz. and 3 lbs.-2 oz. respectively were marked with transponders. They were approximately 3 weeks old



**"FP 102's new litter"**

**August**

***17 August - Uncollared panther #43***

A midnight call from the Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission dispatch alerted us that a vehicle on County Road 846 in Hendry County had struck a panther. The 2-3 year old uncollared male was still alive but unable to use his back legs. Response to stimulus in the tail offered a glimmer of hope that his injury could be corrected through surgery. The panther was transported

to the Veterinary Medical Teaching Hospital at the University of Florida in Gainesville. The surgery was considered a success in that an external fixator (brace) was installed which corrected the vertebral fractures and the panther was tolerating the device. However, after several days there was no significant improvement. The panther was still not eating or drinking, there was no anal or bladder response, and he had not regained use of the hind limbs. This indicated almost certain irreparable damage to the spinal cord. Because of the grave prognosis and difficulties with aftercare, the consensus was a recommendation for euthanasia, which was performed on 29 August.

### ***27 August – Florida panther #49***

FP 49 is 11 years old, which is the oldest known age for a Florida panther to give birth. The den was on the “Addition Lands” of BCNP. One 3-week old male kitten weighing 2 lbs.-7 oz. was marked with a transponder. Scabby lesions of an unknown cause were noted on the head and tip of the tail. At the time of writing (9 October) FP 49’s movements indicate she is still raising the kitten.



‘FP 49’s three-week old male kitten’

### ***30 August – Florida panther #77***

FP 77 did not display typical denning behavior making early detection of her giving birth difficult. However, we became suspicious because of her restricted movements and began to investigate. This den was also on the BCNP “Addition

Lands.” A spunky 3.5-4 week old male kitten weighing 4 lbs was found at the den site. The standard documenting and marking procedures were followed.



**“Kittens are carefully concealed in hard to find dens”**

## **September**

### ***21 September – Florida panther #92***

Our radio-telemetry flights were grounded following the attacks on the World Trade Center on 11 September until the 21<sup>st</sup>. When we resumed flying, FP 92’s collar was detected in the mortality mode in the Flint Pen Strand Unit of the Corkscrew Regional Ecosystem Watershed (CREW) area. Upon investigating the scene all that was discovered were scattered bones. The vultures had already vacated the carcass indicating that FP92 had been dead at least a week. It did not appear that another panther had killed him because the typical canine puncture through the skull was not observed. Foul play cannot absolutely be ruled out but it is unlikely given his location. We will be lucky if a cause of death can be determined from his remains.