

Florida Panther Capture Season Update November 27 - December 6, 2000

Friday December 1, 2000 *TX105 Recollared*

We returned to Everglades National Park after Thanksgiving to resume our search for TX105 whose radio collar had failed. There was some suspicion that TX105's kitten, #94_{F1}, now 16 months old was still traveling with her. By tracking behind #94_{F1}, with the working radio collar, we easily determined that two cats were walking together. Unfortunately for us, at that age kittens don't always follow "on the heels" of their mother. This meant that if we focused our efforts on #94_{F1}, we would likely catch that cat while our intended target, TX105, could be more than a 1/4 mile away. This very scenario played out on Wednesday the 29th when we treed #94_{F1}.



The kitten, #94, is inadvertently treed while attempting to capture her mother.

The next day, tracks and #94_{F1}'s signal showed the pair had continued north towards the main Park highway. They settled in a hammock next to the road for the day. We went out in the evening suspecting they may continue north across the road. We witnessed TX105 cross the road. This was confirmed by #94_{F1}'s signal still emanating from the south side of the road. It was tempting at that moment to go after TX105 but by then it was dark. A night capture in Everglades National Park would have been very risky due to the pinnacle rock, solution holes and proximity to the road. We decided to wait until the next day.

The cats moved into an area inaccessible by truck. We used a helicopter to locate #94_{F1} and in the process were fortunate to also see TX105 walking out ahead of her. The dogs were put out after TX105 and she was shortly treed. TX105 was difficult to see in the thick oak she had climbed. But the extra cover it provided may have helped her feel comfortable and she stayed put after being darted. The tree was covered with poison ivy and grape vines. I had to literally cut my way to her because I couldn't squeeze through the tangled mess. (And yes, I got poison ivy from my neck to my knee!). She was lowered to the ground and furnished with a new radio collar.



TX105 is fitted with a new radio collar.

#23 Dead

On Friday December 1, 2000, female #23 was discovered dead on Big Cypress National Preserve. Unfortunately the vultures didn't leave much for us to examine and a cause of death could not be determined. Number 23 was 14 years old when she died.