

## Florida Panther Field Note Panther Dens Keep Biologists Busy

So far 2002 has been a busy year for us where panther dens are concerned. As of July 19<sup>th</sup>, 13 radio-collared panthers have denned producing a total of 30 kittens. For a period of time we were handling one den per week. That may not sound like much, but a lot of ground work goes into each den examined. Be sure to check out the Field Note on the Biologist-In-A-Box from November 1999 to learn more about that device and see what all we do with panther kittens at the den. Similar numbers of radio-collared panthers have denned in the past 4 years, but what makes this year unique is the timeframe of those dens. They have occurred in a relatively short period. Below is a table summarizing the dens we've handled so far this year.

Panther ID		Date Kittens Handled	Age When Handled	Litter Composition		Area Location
Mother	Father (suspected/known)			Male	Female	
FP73	Uncollared	3/3/02	7 days	2	1	BCNP
FP95	FP85B-FL	4/21/02	3 ½ weeks		1	ENP
FP93	FP79	4/23/02	18 days	1	3	BCNP
FP78	FP59	4/30/02	3 weeks	1	3	FPNWR
FP101	Uncollared	5/9/02	1 ½ weeks	1	1	BCSIR
FP83	Uncollared	5/12/02	3-4 weeks	1		FSSP
FP106	Uncollared	5/27/02	10 days	2	1	FPNWR
FP55	FP79	5/30/02	10 days		1	BCNP
FP75	FP100 or FP98	6/6/02	10 days	2		BCNP
FP112	FP100 or FP98	6/15/02	7 days	2		BCNP
FP67	Uncollared	6/18/02	10 days	2	1	Private
FP107	Uncollared	7/7/02	9-10 days	1	1	FPNWR
FP102	FP79	7/19/02	15 days	1	1	BCNP

Area Location: BCNP = Big Cypress National Preserve; BCSIR = Big Cypress Seminole Indian Reservation; ENP = Everglades National Park; FPNWR = Florida Panther National Wildlife Refuge; FSSP = Fakahatchee Strand State Preserve; Private = Private lands



*FP83's den was in a large fern bed in a cypress strand during the dry season. This little guy was quite mobile at 3-4 weeks of age.*



*Despite the expression on FP106's kitten, he is merely hissing to express his displeasure at being weighed.*



*Only 1-week-old, FP112 kitten's eyes have not opened yet.*