

Florida Panther Field Notes

Capture Season Update

March 2002

Sunday March 3, 2002

FP73_{F1} Den – FP73_{F1} had denned on the east side of the Addition Lands of Big Cypress National Preserve (BCNP). We pinpointed the den on Saturday and set up the “biologist-in-a-box.” She left the den about 8:30 am on Sunday so we headed out to find the kittens. We found 1 male and 2 females huddled together in a palmetto patch under a maple tree. Their eyes were not fully opened yet indicating they were only about 7 days old. They each weighed right around 2 pounds.



FP73kitten.jpg – One of FP73's week old kittens.

Wednesday March 6, 2002

FP60 Recollared – Male FP60's radio-collar was changed in Fakahatchee Strand State Preserve near the end of Jane's Scenic Drive. We watched him cross Jane's, as the dogs began to trail him, after which he was quickly treed. It appeared there was no way for him to hang up in the bay tree he was in because the branches were so small. But as the drugs took affect he managed to remain perched 25 feet in the air at which point he was lowered to the ground by rope. During his exam we noticed that the inside toe on the left hind foot was missing a claw and severely abscessed. It appeared that the toe had been broken some time ago and the bones had fused together but a chronic infection remained. After much deliberation the decision was made to amputate the toe. Given the length and severity of the infection (it would require several weeks for the bones to fuse together), this seemed to be the best option to get FP60 back on his feet as quickly as possible. He is doing fine since his impromptu surgery and continues to make large movements between flights.



Looking like an old neighborhood tomcat, FP60 shows evidence of previous territorial disputes.

Wednesday March 13, 2002

FP103 Recollared – Female FP103, in the Turner River Unit of BCNP, needed to have her kitten collar replaced with an adult sized radio-collar. She first treed in a cypress tree in a small cypress dome that, unfortunately, had about 1.5 feet of standing water in it. Because of the unsafe conditions we decided to let her come down and re-tree her hoping for a safer location. Our efforts paid off as the next tree was smaller (although we still deployed the crash bag) and the ground underneath was dry. FP103 is on the smaller end of the panther scale only weighing 55 pounds at just under 2 years old.



Our second effort paid off and we were able to catch FP103 on dry ground.