

**Florida Panther Capture Activities**  
**6 - 10 March, 2000**  
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This week was spent capturing panthers in Big Cypress National Preserve. The first part of the week was devoted to #71<sub>F1</sub>'s family group. After a successful capture of one of her kittens we focused our effort on #55 whose collar failed during the early part of the week.

**8 March, 2000**

The first kitten we collared from #71<sub>F1</sub>'s litter was female #86<sub>F2</sub> 16 days ago (21 February, 2000). This family has since regrouped and we can safely make an attempt at capturing another uncollared kitten. For the past few days they had been in an area inaccessible by buggy. However, today they were on the move within our reach. The dogs caught up to the panthers as they passed by a hardwood hammock where several were treed simultaneously. The dogs were kept at a tree with an uncollared kitten. Number 90<sub>F2</sub>, a male, was the next panther to land in our net and be added to the study population. At eight months old, he weighed 50 pounds. His adult canine teeth were just beginning to appear behind his baby teeth. The upper canines had not broken through the gums yet but the lower canines had erupted about one centimeter.



The second kitten to be radio-collared from #71<sub>F1</sub>'s litter, #90<sub>F2</sub>, quickly recovers after capture.

**9 March, 2000**

Panther #55's collar prematurely failed four days ago. Fortunately, we had collared one of her kittens, #87, 10 days earlier and used her to locate #55. Panther #55's kittens historically disperse sooner rather than later. Since #87 was already 10 months old we knew our time was limited if we were to easily locate #55 with her collared kitten. Getting close to this family group required a several hour buggy ride because they were just about in the middle of Big Cypress National Preserve. Because of the distance, our initial plan was to drive out then do the capture the following morning. However, by the time we reached the family the sun was beginning to set and the day began to cool enhancing

conditions for a capture. Another advantage to capturing #55 that evening was that we knew where she was. If we waited until morning there was a chance that she would move during the night forcing us to search for her before we could make an attempt at capture. The dogs were led towards #87's radio signal. After a brief chase both #87 and #55 climbed up and out on a horizontal limb of the same oak tree, a very rare occurrence. Typically if more than one panther is treed at the same time they are in different trees. Roy snuck in under the pair and gently fired a dart into #55. She jumped out and re-treed in another oak a short distance away while #87 stayed put. We caught #55 in the net and finished the work-up as it was getting dark. Afterwards we drove away from the capture site giving the panthers a wide berth to recover and regroup. We found a spot to pitch our tents and drove out the next morning.