

South Florida Deer Research Project Quarterly Update January – March 2016

Capture Activities

- Second helicopter capture session was conducted during January 6- 13, 2016. As last year, we contracted Dragonfly Aviation and NPS Big Cypress National Preserve Aviation team provided us a second helicopter to facilitate the capture efforts.
- During the 8 days of helicopter capture effort we radio-collared 80 deer. We also used rocket-netting and darting to capture and collar 4 additional deer. The sex ratio of the radio-collared deer was 58 females, 26 males. In addition, we captured 6 subadults (3 males, 3 females) that were ear tagged only and re-captured 1 adult female to replace a collar. One deer died during capture efforts.

Survival Monitoring

- During this quarter, we investigated 29 mortality events. Ten of the 29 mortalities occurred within 14 days of capture (7 occurred within 1-5 days of capture) or appeared to be related to collaring (e.g., animal found dead with leg caught in collar) and are not included in the cause-specific categories.
- The remaining 19 mortalities (16 females, 3 males) were categorized as follows: 14 panther predation events, 4 bobcat predation events, and 1 trauma (cause unknown).
- In some instances we cannot definitively eliminate the possibility of scavenging, and the causes of all mortality data should be considered preliminary until all reviews are completed.

Camera Trapping

- We continued to monitor the 180 cameras in the Florida Panther National Wildlife Refuge and Big Cypress National Preserve.
- Each camera trap was visited at least three times during the quarter to download data and to maintain the trap site (i.e., clear vegetation, replace batteries, and exchange any malfunctioning cameras).

Other Activities

- We continued to compile and process photo data, to date 165,000 images have been processed and catalogued by species.
- We also continue to compile and process GPS collar data. To date, approximately 250,000 deer locations have been acquired via GPS-telemetry.
- Our outreach activities this quarter included a poster presentation at the Predator Prey Conference in Ventura Beach, California and 3 oral presentations at the Southeast Deer Study Group Meeting, Concord, North Carolina. Daniel Crawford, one of the UGA graduate students, won the 2nd place award for the best student presentation at the SEDG meeting.

Few photos showing the wet condition during this quarter. Rainfall in January 2016 exceeded typical rainfall by several inches; total rainfall for BCNP was 9.6 inches, compared to a long term average of 1.5 inches.

