

## Florida Panther Field Note December 2003

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission Florida Panther Capture Team split the month of December working on the Big Cypress Seminole Indian Reservation and Everglades National Park. Two panthers were captured and 3 died this month.

### Captures

- Female **FP121** was captured for the initial time on December 2<sup>nd</sup> on the Big Cypress Seminole Indian Reservation. She was fairly large for a female, weighing 95 pounds, and estimated to be 2-3 years old. She was fitted with a satellite radio-collar that collects 2 positions per day.



Satellite radio-collars are a little larger than the standard collars normally used, but a big female like FP121 can handle the extra bulk.

- Male **FP117** was recaptured on the Big Cypress Seminole Indian Reservation on December 3<sup>rd</sup> in order to change his radio-collar. He was also fitted with a satellite radio-collar. He is now about 1 year 9 months old and weighed 128 pounds.



Because FP117 is a young male and still growing, his collar has a preprogrammed “break-away” device (the black box visible here on the collar) to ensure the collar does not get too tight. The FWC plans to recapture him before this device needs to be activated.

### **Mortalities**

- Male Uncollared Florida Panther #60 (**UCFP60**) was struck by a vehicle on US41 in Collier County shortly after 6:00 pm on December 9<sup>th</sup>. He was obviously dazed from head trauma and didn't have use of his rear legs. The capture team, including the veterinarian, was in Everglades National Park at the time (about 2 hours away) for capture activities there. Upon arrival of Dr. Mark Cunningham, the panther was quickly stabilized and transported to the Veterinary Medical Teaching Hospital at the University of Florida in Gainesville where his injuries were attended. Despite a hopeful prognosis, UCFP60 died on Saturday December 13<sup>th</sup>. Upon necropsy it was discovered that internal injuries were more severe than initially thought.
- Female **FP91** died from intraspecific aggression on Big Cypress National Preserve on December 12<sup>th</sup>. Based on tracks and scrapes found at the scene, an uncollared male panther was the culprit. Although FP91 was 4 years old she never produced a litter of kittens. She was last handled for a routine radio-collar replacement on March 18, 2003 and was in good condition.
- Female Uncollared Florida Panther #61 (**UCFP61**) was struck by a vehicle on CR833 in Hendry County at approximately 11:30 pm on Christmas Eve. Initial reports indicated the panther did not have use of its hind legs and was bleeding from the mouth. Similar preparations as with UCFP60 were made, however UCFP61 died shortly before the arrival of biologists Lotz and Shindle at 2:30 am on Christmas morning. UCFP61 weighed 84 pounds, was in good physical condition, and estimated to be 2-3 years old.