

FLORIDA PANTHER GENETIC RESTORATION PROGRESS REPORT

JANUARY, FEBRUARY, MARCH 1998

TX101 -- Both of TX101's kittens (#65_{F1}, #66_{F1}) became independent early in January. Since this time, TX 101 has continued to utilize the Big Cypress Seminole Indian Reservation Game Pen as her core use area but has also been venturing outside of the pen more frequently in all directions. In March she was located outside of the pen on a weekly basis. Since a contraceptive implant was surgically inserted on 18 November 1997, TX101 has not produced any more kittens, thus confirming the success of this technique.

Florida panther #65_{F1} -- This 15 month old male began dispersal movements in February. They began as relatively short movements at first, regularly returning to the pen area. By late February he left the pen in a northerly direction and has not looked back. By early March he had traveled several miles northwest near the area of Rocky Lake. Since then he has generally ventured west covering country near the Berry Grove Farms (approximately 2 miles north of the Collier/Hendry county line) to properties owned by Collier Enterprises and the Collier Companies north of the Hendry Correctional Institute on CR 858.

Florida panther #66_{F1} -- This panther has primarily utilized the game pen. She has been located outside of the pen on several occasions however.

TX103 -- TX103 maintained her usual movement patterns on the south side of U.S. 41 in the Big Cypress National Preserve (BCNP) throughout this period. January's movements were concentrated around the Gum Slough-Lostman's Pines area of the Stair Steps unit. During February and March she utilized the western portion of her home range and the Gum Slough area.

TX104 -- TX104 spent the bulk of this period in the Belle Meade portion of her range on both sides of I-75. Most of February, however, was spent on the Florida Panther National Wildlife Refuge (FPNWR) with only one location in Fakahatchee Strand State Preserve (FSSP). While on the Refuge, she spent a couple of flights with male panther #60 and was located in the company of TX106 on one occasion.

TX105 -- This cougar predominantly occupied Long Pine Key in Everglades National Park (ENP). However, she made some extensive movements ranging from just southwest of Homestead General Airport to several miles southwest of the Daniel Beard Research Center. Her uncollared kitten, approximately 18 months old, is presumed to have dispersed.

TX106 -- In late January, TX106 began restricting her movements and we suspected she was about to den. It was not until the first part of February, however, when she finally did so. The den site was visited on 17 February in an area west of Desoto Blvd. in the Golden Gate Estates. One male kitten was found. On 25 February, TX106 was located with male #60 2-miles away from the den and 2 hours later she had returned to her kitten. The following week, TX106 was in the company of males #59 and #60 on separate occasions on the FPNWR. The second week in March, TX106 appeared to have moved her den south by about ½ mile. However, by 16 March, TX106 began a week-long trip into FSSP and subsequently returned to FPNWR. We speculate she lost her kitten for unknown reasons, although the proximity of male #60 on 25 February was suspicious.

TX107 -- TX107 spent January primarily in an area north of the Oasis Visitor Center on BCNP except for an excursion into the Turner River Unit northwest of Monroe Station. In February she moved to an area about 5 miles north of Monument Lake. Here, on 25 February, we collared one of her 10 month old female kittens. This 60 pound panther became #70_{F1}. Unfortunately the collar fell off but in our attempts to recover #70_{F1}, we caught and collared the other female kitten. This panther became #71_{F1} on 5 March. Tranquilizing and handling of #71_{F1} were kept to a minimum to facilitate reunion of the family group. They were together the following day. Efforts are currently underway to recollar #70_{F1}.

TX108 -- While searching for TX105's 18 month old kitten, TX108's latest den was found near Turkey Hammock on Long Pine Key in ENP on 11 February. Two, 3-week old kittens of each sex were marked with transponders and they weighed approximately 3 pounds each.

Florida panther #61_{F1} -- This 21 month old female panther utilized the eastern portion of Long Pine Key in ENP. She has extended her movements to the rocky glades area to the west of Homestead General Airport. She has primarily been occupying hardwood hammocks in Long Pine Key as well as the Hole-In-The-Donut area to the south and east of the Daniel Beard Center.