

## **SUMMARY OF THE FLORIDA FISH AND WILDLIFE CONSERVATION COMMISSION'S 2001-2002 PANTHER CAPTURE SEASON**

This report briefly summarizes the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission's (FWC) 2001-2002 panther capture season activities. This summary does not include data collected prior to November 2001 or subsequent to April 2002. These data, along with a more detailed summary of the activities described hereafter, will be provided in the FWC's annual report on *Florida Panther Genetic Restoration and Management*.

### **Capture Effort and Results**

Our capture efforts began 01 November 2001 and continued through 22 April 2002. The primary objectives of our capture work this season were 1) the scheduled replacement of radiocollars, either because of depleted battery life or neck circumference concerns, and 2) the deployment of 4 collars equipped with Global Positioning System (GPS) receivers. We captured 14 panthers during the study period. We recollared 8 panthers and added 6 new panthers to our radiocollared sample (Table 1). As of 30 April 2001, we have 46 panthers and 3 Texas cougars radiocollared (Table 2; Figure 1). However, 10 of these panthers have radiocollars that are no longer functioning. Seventeen of the radiocollared panthers are confirmed first- or second-generation progeny of Texas cougars.

Nine panthers were scheduled for recollaring prior to the start of the '01-02 capture season for routine collar replacement. We recollared 7 of these cats; however, the transmitter on FP77 failed prematurely and FP97 was killed prior to any capture attempts. Additionally, 1 unscheduled recollar (FP93<sub>B-TX</sub>) was performed due to suspicions of a malfunctioning transmitter.

We successfully deployed 4 GPS-equipped collars on previously uncollared panthers (FP109, FP110, FP111, and FP112) as part of a feasibility study to determine the utility of this technology in monitoring panthers in southern Florida. With the exception of the 4 aforementioned panthers, no uncollared panthers or dependent-aged kittens of radiocollared panthers were purposefully targeted for the routine deployment of VHF radiocollars. FP107 was darted under the assumption she was FP99, who

was being pursued for a scheduled recollar. FP108, a dependent male offspring treed during the pursuit FP87<sub>B-FL</sub>, was opportunistically radiocollared to maintain contact with FP87<sub>B-FL</sub> in the event her transmitter failed. Two uncollared panthers; a second dependent offspring of FP87<sub>B-FL</sub> and an adult male paired with female FP112, were incidentally treed during our pursuit of the aforementioned objectives, but not captured.

### **Release of Rehabilitated Panthers (FP65 and FP104)**

FP65<sub>F1</sub> and FP104 suffered fractures during the '00-01 capture season and were removed from the field for surgery and subsequent convalescence at White Oak Plantation. Both panthers were returned to the wild this capture season. FP104 was released 28 November 2001 in his natal home range in SBICY. Movement patterns since release have been consistent with that of a dispersing male. FP65<sub>F1</sub> was released 24 January 2002 in his former home range in Okaloacoochee Slough. Subsequent to his release, FP65<sub>F1</sub> has reoccupied his former home range northeast of Immokalee.

### **Reproduction**

During the capture season, we handled litters of FP73<sub>F1</sub>, FP95<sub>F1</sub>, FP93<sub>B-TX</sub>, and FP78 (Table 3). FP73 denned in late February 2002 on NBICY and we documented 3 kittens (2 ♂; 1 ♀) on 03 March 2002. FP95<sub>F1</sub> denned in late March 2002 in ENP and we documented 1 female kitten on 21 April 2002. FP93<sub>B-TX</sub> denned in early April 2002 and 4 kittens (1 ♂; 3 ♀) were handled on 23 April 2002. Lastly, FP78 denned in early April 2002 on FPNWR and we documented 4 kittens (1 ♂; 3 ♀) on 30 April 2002. All neonate kittens handled were marked with subcutaneous transponder chips for identification and had biomedical samples collected for genetic analyses.

### **Mortalities**

Four radiocollared panthers died and 2 uncollared panther mortalities were documented during the capture season (Table 4). FP97, FP96, and FP49 died from intraspecific aggression. Males FP97 and FP96 were killed by uncollared male panthers on private lands in Collier Co. (December 2001 and January 2002), respectively. Female FP49 was killed by an uncollared male panther on NBICY in

January 2002. Female FP105 died from unknown causes on the FPNWR in January 2002. The 2 uncollared male panthers, UCFP45 and UCFP46, died from vehicular trauma on US27 in Glades Co. and on SR29 in Collier Co. in April 2002, respectively.

**Prepared by: FWC Panther Section**

**Table 1. Summary of Florida panther captures during the 2001-2002 Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission's capture season (November 2001 - April 2002).**

Cat ID <sup>a</sup>	Sex	Capture Date	Capture Location <sup>b</sup>	Age	Weight (lb.)	Kinked Tail	Cowlick	Descended Testicles	Vaginal Papillomas	Capture Comments and Medical Notes
FP60	M	06 Mar 2002	FSSP	6 yr	118	Y	Y	2	N/A	Digit amputation
FP67	F	22 Apr 2002	PL	3 yr 10 mos	81	N	Y	N/A		Pregnant.
FP78	F	14 Dec 2001	FPNWR	4-5 yr	74	Y	Y	N/A		
FP87 <sub>B-FL</sub>	F	03 Nov 2001	SBICY	2 yr 6 mos	80	N	Y	N/A		Dam of FP108. At least one other kitten treed during pursuit.
FP93 <sub>BTX</sub>	F	28 Feb 2002	SBICY	3 yr	90	N	N	N/A		Captured to replace suspected malfunctioning transmitter. With uncollared male. Pregnant.
FP96	M	01 Nov 2001	FPNWR	19 mos	92	Y	Y	2	N/A	Fitted with "break-away" collar.
FP99	M	06 Nov 2001	FPNWR	21 mos	102	Y	Y	2	N/A	Fitted with "break-away" collar.
FP103	F	13 Mar 2002	SBICY	22 mos	55	N	N	N/A		
FP107	F	01 Nov 2001	FPNWR	19 mos	74	Y	Y	N/A		Incidental capture during pursuit of FP99.
FP108	M	03 Nov 2001	SBICY	11 mos	74	N	Y	2		Incidental capture during pursuit of FP87. Fitted with "break-away" collar.
FP109	M	10 Feb 2002	OKSSF	10 yr	148	Y	U	1	N/A	Fitted with GPS collar.
FP109	-	20 Feb 2002	OKSSF	-	-	-	-	-	-	Recaptured to reestablish battery connection on GPS transmitter.
FP110	F	13 Feb 2002	OKSSF	14 mos	74	N	Y	N/A		Fitted with GPS collar. Independent offspring of FP82.
FP111	M	14 Feb 2002	OKSSF	8-10 yr	128	Y	N	1	N/A	Fitted with GPS collar.
FP112	F	25 Feb 2002	NBICY	3 yr 6 mos	84	Y	Y	N/A		Fitted with GPS collar. Uncollared male also treed, but not collared.

---

<sup>a</sup>FP denotes panthers captured for radiocollaring; F1 denotes Florida panther x Texas cougar offspring; B-FL subscript denotes offspring of F1 x Florida panther mating; B-TX subscript denotes offspring of F1 x Texas cougar mating.

<sup>b</sup>FPNWR = Florida Panther National Wildlife Refuge; OKSSF = Okaloacoochee Slough State Forest; NBICY = Big Cypress National Preserve north of Interstate 75; FSSP = Fakahatchee Strand State Preserve; SBICY = Big Cypress National Preserve south of Interstate 75; PL = private lands north of Bear Island.

**Table 2. Status of radio-collared Florida panthers and Texas cougars as of 30 April 2002.**

Cat ID <sup>a</sup>	Sex	Location <sup>b</sup>	Last Collaring	Comments
FP32	F	FPNWR/PL	24 Jan 2000	Last recollaring
FP48	F	NBICY	09 Jan 1998	Collar out 05 Jul 2000
FP54	M	FSSP	02 Feb 1998	Collar out 23 Oct 2000
FP55	F	SBICY	09 Mar 2000	<b>Recollar 2002-2003</b>
FP56	F	NBICY	07 Mar 1997	Collar out 23 Feb 1998
FP57	F	FSSP	29 Jan 1998	Collar out 07 Apr 2000
FP59	M	FPNWR/PL	15 Feb 2001	
FP60	M	FSSP/FPNWR	06 Mar 2002	
FP61 <sub>F1</sub>	F	ENP	17 Feb 2000	<b>Recollar 2002-2003</b>
FP62	M	Polk/Oceola Co.	25 Mar 1998	Collar out 24 Jul 2000
FP65 <sub>F1</sub>	M	PL	21 Jan 2002	Last recollaring
FP66 <sub>F1</sub>	F	PL	09 Dec 1997	Collar out 01 May 2000
FP67	F	PL	22 Apr 2002	
FP69	F	NBICY	15 Aug 1998	Collar out 05 Feb 2001
FP70 <sub>F1</sub>	F	SBICY	25 Feb 1998	Collar out 24 Jan 2000
FP71 <sub>F1</sub>	F	SBICY	05 Mar 1998	Collar out 12 Jul 2000
FP73 <sub>F1</sub>	F	BCSIR/NBICY	10 Jan 2000	<b>Recollar 2002-2003</b>
FP75	F	NBICY/PL	09 May 2000	<b>Recollar 2002-2003</b>
FP77	F	NBICY/BCSIR	22 Jan 1999	Collar out 10 Oct 2001
FP78	F	FPNWR	14 Dec 2001	
FP79 <sub>F1</sub>	M	SBICY	15 Nov 2000	
FP81	M	PL/BCSIR	14 Jan 2000	<b>Recollar 2002-2003</b>
FP82	F	OKSSF/PL	25 Jan 2000	<b>Recollar 2002-2003</b>
FP83 <sub>F1</sub>	F	FSSP	24 Feb 2000	<b>Recollar 2002-2003</b>
FP85 <sub>B-FL</sub>	M	ENP	26 Feb 2001	
FP86 <sub>F2</sub>	F	SBICY	21 Feb 2001	
FP87 <sub>B-FL</sub>	F	SBICY	03 Nov 2001	
FP88 <sub>F2</sub>	F	SBICY	01 Mar 2001	
FP91 <sub>F2</sub>	F	SBICY	21 Mar 2001	
FP93 <sub>B-TX</sub>	F	SBICY	28 Feb 2002	
FP94 <sub>F1</sub>	F	ENP	01 May 2000	<b>Recollar 2002-2003</b>
FP95 <sub>F1</sub>	F	ENP	07 Nov 2000	
FP98	M	NBICY/PL	25 Jan 2001	
FP99	M	CREW	06 Nov 2001	<b>Recollar 2002-2003</b>
FP100	M	NBICY/BCSIR	31 Jan 2001	
FP101	F	NBICY/BCSIR	02 Feb 2001	
FP102	F	SBICY	20 Feb 2001	
FP103	F	SBICY	13 Mar 2002	
FP104	M	SBICY	28 Nov 2001	<b>Recollar 2002-2003</b>
FP106	F	FPNWR	12 Apr 2001	
FP107	F	FPNWR	01 Nov 2001	
FP108	M	SBICY	03 Nov 2001	<b>Recollar 2002-2003</b>
FP109	M	OKSSF	20 Feb 2002	<b>Recollar 2002-2003</b>
FP110	F	OKSSF	13 Feb 2002	<b>Recollar 2002-2003</b>
FP111	M	OKSSF	14 Feb 2002	<b>Recollar 2002-2003</b>
FP112	F	NBICY	25 Feb 2002	<b>Recollar 2002-2003</b>
TX105	F	ENP	01 Dec 2000	
TX106	F	FPNWR/FSSP	21 Jan 2000	<b>Recollar 2002-2003</b>
TX108	F	ENP	14 Dec 1999	<b>Recollar 2002</b>

<sup>a</sup>FP denotes panthers captured for radiocollaring; TX denotes Texas cougars used for Panther Genetic Restoration; F1 subscript denotes Florida panther x Texas cougar offspring; F2 subscript denotes offspring of F1 x F1 mating; B-FL subscript denotes offspring of F1 x Florida panther mating; B-TX subscript denotes offspring of F1 x Texas cougar mating.

<sup>b</sup>ENP = Everglades National Park; BCSIR = Big Cypress Seminole Indian Reservation; FPNWR = Florida Panther National Wildlife Refuge; OKSSF = Okaloacoochee Slough State Forest; NBICY = Big Cypress National Preserve north of Interstate 75; FSSP = Fakahatchee Strand State Preserve; SBCICY = Big Cypress National Preserve south of Interstate 75; CREW = Corkscrew Regional Ecosystem Watershed; PL = Private lands.

Distribution of Radiocollared Florida Panthers and Texas Pumas  
30 April 2002

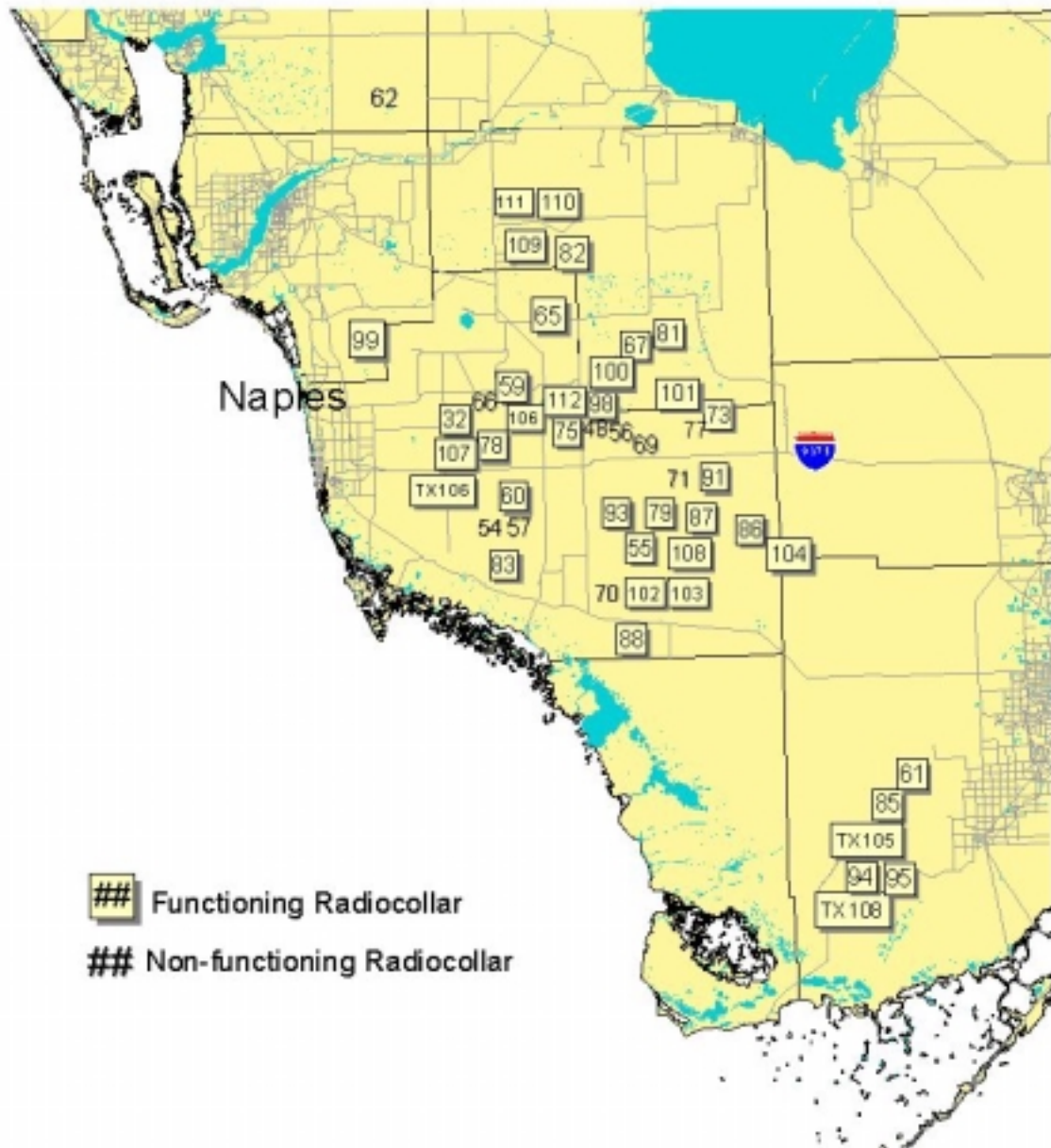


Figure 1

**Table 3. Summary of neonate kittens handled at Florida panther dens November 2001 – April 2002.**

Dam ID <sup>a</sup>	Kitten ID	Location <sup>a</sup>	Date Handled	~ Age	Weight	Kinked Tail	Comments
FP73 <sub>F1</sub>	K109♂	NBICY	03 Mar 2002	1 wk	2 lbs 1 oz	N	No significant observations when handled. Kitten appeared in good health.
	K110♂	NBICY	03 Mar 2002	1 wk	2 lbs 3 oz	N	No significant observations when handled. Kitten appeared in good health.
	K111♀	NBICY	03 Mar 2002	1 wk	1lbs 15 oz	N	No significant observations when handled. Kitten appeared in good health.
FP95 <sub>F1</sub>	K112♀	ENP	21 Apr 2002	3.5 wks	3 lbs 5 oz	N	No significant observations when handled. Kitten appeared in good health.
FP93 <sub>B-TX</sub>	K113♀	SBICY	23 Apr 2002	2.5 wks	3 lbs 11 oz	N	No significant observations when handled. Kitten appeared in good health.
	K114♀	SBICY	23 Apr 2002	2.5 wks	3 lbs 2 oz	N	No significant observations when handled. Kitten appeared in good health.
	K115♂	SBICY	23 Apr 2002	2.5 wks	3 lbs 0 oz	N	No significant observations when handled. Kitten appeared in good health.
	K116♀	SBICY	23 Apr 2002	2.5 wks	3 lbs 3 oz	N	No significant observations when handled. Kitten appeared in good health.
FP78	K117♀	FPNWR	30 Apr 2002	3 wks	2 lbs 7 oz	Y	Dermatitis on crown.
	K118♀	FPNWR	30 Apr 2002	3 wks	2 lbs 12 oz	Y	Dermatitis on crown. Wheezing.
	K119♀	FPNWR	30 Apr 2002	3 wks	2 lbs 10 oz	Y	No significant observations when handled. Kitten appeared in good health.
	K120♂	FPNWR	30 Apr 2002	3 wks	3 lbs 9 oz	Y	No significant observations when handled. Kitten appeared in good health.

<sup>a</sup>FP denotes panthers captured for radiocollaring; K denotes kittens handled at panther or Texas cougar dens; TX denotes Texas cougars used for Panther Genetic Restoration; F1 subscript denotes Florida panther x Texas cougar offspring; F2 subscript denotes offspring of F1 x F1 mating; B-FL subscript denotes offspring of F1 x Florida panther mating; B-TX subscript denotes offspring of F1 x Texas cougar mating.

<sup>b</sup>ENP = Everglades National Park; FPNWR = Florida Panther National Wildlife Refuge; NBICY = Big Cypress National Preserve north of Interstate 75; SBICY = Big Cypress National Preserve south of Interstate 75.

**Table 4. Florida panther mortalities documented during the 2001-2002 capture season (November 2001 – April 2002).**

Cat ID <sup>a</sup>	Sex	Age (yr)	Date	Location <sup>b</sup>	Cause
FP97	M	1.8	03 Dec 2001	Private lands, Collier Co.	Intraspecific aggression
FP49	F	12	04 Jan 2002	NBICY	Intraspecific aggression
FP105	F	8	16 Jan 2002	FPNWR	Unknown
FP96	M	1.7	18 Jan 2002	Private lands, Collier Co.	Intraspecific aggression
UCFP45	M	2-3	05 Apr 2002	US27, Glades Co.	Vehicular trauma
UCFP46	M	0.5	10 Apr 2002	SR29, Collier Co.	Vehicular trauma

<sup>a</sup>FP denotes panthers captured for radiocollaring; UCFP denotes uncollared Florida panthers, typically roadkills.

<sup>b</sup>NBICY = Big Cypress National Preserve north of Interstate 75; FPNWR = Florida Panther National Wildlife Refuge.