



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Florida Panther *Update*

December 2012

Cameras on refuge reveal positive side of Panther kitten survival

With an estimated adult panther population of 100-160, the recent record setting panther road mortalities have received a lot of attention. Without further analysis, one could easily come to the conclusion that this trend is not sustainable. However, for all of this bad news, there are also encouraging trends. This year, 15 radio collared females have given birth to 40 kittens and the uncollared population has produced many unknown litters. In fact, remote trail cameras on the 26,000-acre Florida Panther National Wildlife Refuge detected two uncollared family groups on the refuge this fall.



Family Group 1

These images of an uncollared female panther moving her three kittens to another den could be the first time anyone has captured a photo of a panther moving her kittens between den sites. We do not know the reasons why she moved her kittens, but one possibility is that she moved them when her original dens site got too wet due to 1.03 inches of rainfall in the 24 hours before these photos were taken.

Two months later, on November 25, 2012, the cameras captured the same female with all three kittens following her closely. (Look closely in the bushes in front of the camera for the third kitten). "These photos were taken about one mile from where the original photos of her relocating her den site and could be the kittens first time out of the new den," said Kevin Godsea, Project Leader at Florida Panther and Thousand Island National Wildlife Refuges.



Family Group 2

Meanwhile, on the refuge's west side, the cameras captured a second family group with two kittens. They look to be about one month older than those in the first family group. Unique morphological characteristics (such as the female's cowlick in this photo) do allow us to uniquely identify the difference between the two family groups.

"The typical survival rate of Florida panther kittens is about 30 percent, so it is encouraging to see the number of panther births by radio collared panther and these two family groups captured by field cameras collective indicators that kitten survival potentially outpace and offsets the vehicular mortality rate." said Godsea. This is not to say that the number of vehicle collisions with panthers is not a concern, and it certainly warrants continued population monitoring as drivers are urged to be cautious when driving in panther country.



Table 1. 2012 Panther Mortality as of December 12, 2012

This information is being provided as required by Section 2(e) of the Endangered Species Cooperative Agreement between the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). It is not intended as a News Release. All information should be considered "pending" until all necropsy results and tests are finalized.

Date	PantherID	Sex	Age	Location	Cause
1/2/2012	UCFP166	M	4 to 5	SR 82, 3.8km W of SR 29, Collier County	Vehicle
1/5/2012	FP189	M	3.5	Tomato field S of Oil Well Rd, Collier County	Intraspecific Aggression
1/7/2012	UCFP167	F	4	US41, 0.5km W of Manatee Rd, Collier County	Vehicle
1/13/2012	FP194	M	20 mo.	Southern Big Cypress	Intraspecific Aggression
2/6/2012	UCFP168	M	5	US41, 0.4km E of Bass Rd, Collier County	Vehicle
2/23/2012	K351	M	12 days	BCNP	Malnutrition
2/27/2012	FP133	M	12	Fakahatchee Strand State Preserve	Intraspecific Aggression
4/7/2012	UCFP169	M	9 wks	Orange grove N of Church Rd., Hendry County	Vehicle
4/16/2012	UCFP170	M	3 to 4	Alico Rd, 0.1 km W of Airport Haul Rd, Lee County	Vehicle
5/18/2012	FP212	M	3	2 km NW of CR846 and County Line Rd intersection	Intraspecific Aggression
5/21/2012	FP211	M	2	Orange grove 8.7km SE of prison, Hendry County	Intraspecific Aggression
5/23/2012	UCFP171	M	1.5-2	SR80, 23km east of I75, Lee County	Vehicle
5/26/2012	UCFP172	M	4 mo.	Captivity, originally found SR82, 240m E of Church Rd., Collier County	Vehicle
6/19/2012	UCFP173	F	7 mo.	CR 846, 2.4 km E of Oil Well Grade Rd	Vehicle
7/18/2012	FP197	M	4.5	Lee County Port Authority Mitigation Land, Lee County	Unknown
8/28/2012	UCFP174	UNK	10 mo.	Prairie 2.1 km N of Keri Rd, E of Ok Slough, Hendry County	Intraspecific Aggression
10/6/2012	FP196	F	2.5	US41, 1.4km east of San Marco Rd, Collier County	Vehicle
10/8/2012	UCFP175	M	12-14 mo.	SR29, 2.7km north of US41, Collier County	Vehicle
10/9/2012	UCFP176	F	3 mo.	Immokalee Rd, 3.2km north of fairgrounds, Collier County	Vehicle
11/3/2012	UCFP177	F	4 mo.	18 th Ave NE, Golden Gate Estates, west of Everglades Blvd.	Vehicle
11/14/2012	UCFP178	F	1	SR 29 1.5 miles south of I-75	Vehicle
11/19/2012	UCFP179	M	3	SR29, Owl Hammock Curve (S of Immokalee)	Vehicle
11/19/2012	UCFP180	M	4-5	US 41 0.5 miles west of Manatee Road, Collier County	Vehicle
11/26/2012	UCFP181	F	2-3 mo	Immokalee Rd, 3.6 mi north of Oil Well Rd	Vehicle
12/09/2012	UCFP182	M	3	SR 528/Beachline Expressway, Orange County	Vehicle
12/11/2012	FP182	F	2yr 10mo.	60 m south of US41 in Big Cypress NP	Pending

Florida Panther Update Partnership This newsletter is made possible through the efforts of the following agencies:

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) www.floridapanther.net.org

Big Cypress National Preserve (BCNP) www.nps.gov/bicy

Florida Panther National Wildlife Refuge (FPNWR) www.fws.gov/floridapanther

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