

Florida Panther Safety Tips

Encounters with Florida panthers are rare. But if you live, work or recreate in panther habitat, there are things you can do to enhance your safety and that of friends and family.



Be Alert From Dusk 'Til Dawn

When it comes to personal safety, always be aware of your surroundings. Florida panthers are most active at night. Exercise more caution at dawn, dusk and during the night.



Landscape For Safety

Remove vegetation that provides cover for panthers. Remove plants that attract wildlife (especially deer). By attracting them, you naturally attract their predator—the panther.



Keep Panther Prey Away

Deer, raccoons and wild hogs are prey for the Florida panther. By feeding deer or other wildlife, you may inadvertently attract panthers. Wildlife food such as unsecured garbage, pet foods and vegetable gardens also may attract prey.



Keep Pets Safe And Secure

Roaming pets are easy prey for predators including panthers. Supervise pets and then bring them inside or keep them in a comfortable, secure and covered kennel. Feeding pets outside also may attract raccoons and other panther prey.



Keep Livestock Secure

Where practical, keep chickens, goats, hogs or other livestock in enclosed sheds or barns at night.



Supervise Children

Keep children close to you, especially outdoors between dusk and dawn. Educate them about panthers and other wildlife they might encounter.



Never Approach A Panther

Most panthers want to avoid humans. Give a panther the time and space to steer clear of you.



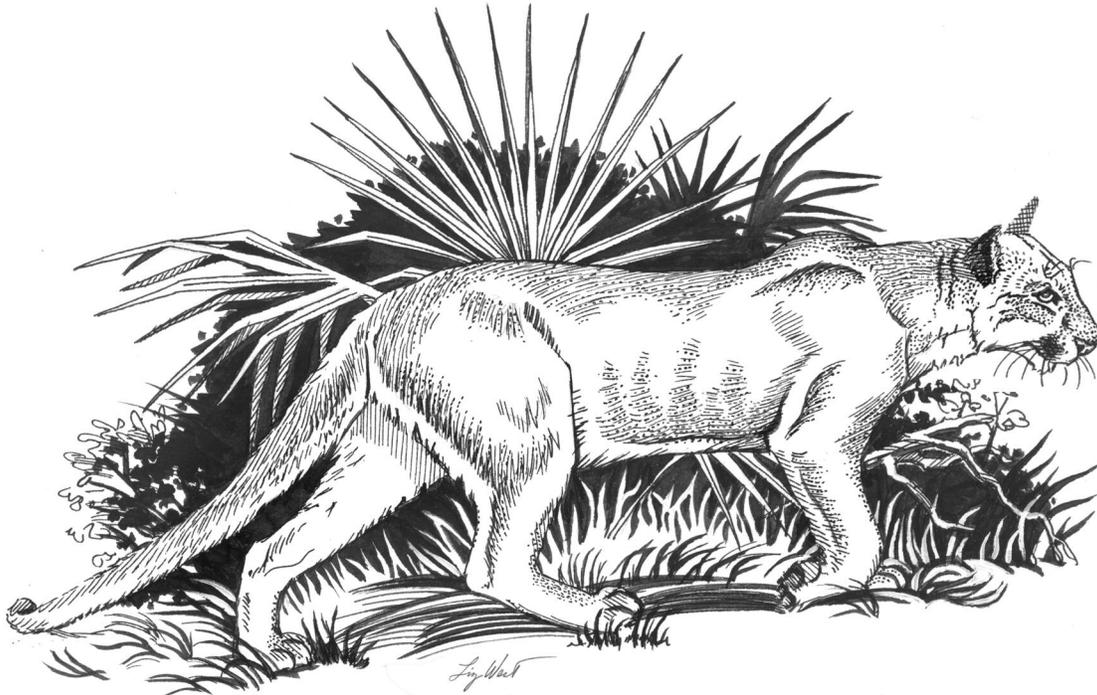
Hike With A Friend

Always hike, backpack and camp when in wild areas with a companion.

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
United States Fish and Wildlife Service
National Park Service

1-888-404-3922  [MyFWC.com/panther](https://myfwc.com/panther)

If You Encounter A Panther:



Make yourself appear larger, open your jacket, raise your arms, throw stones, branches, etc., without turning away. Wave raised arms slowly, and speak slowly, firmly, loudly to communicate that you are not prey and may actually be a danger to it.

Avoid crouching or bending over. Squatting or bending over makes you look smaller, resembling a prey-sized animal.

Do not run. Running may stimulate a panther's instinct to chase. Stand and face the animal. Make eye contact.

Give the panther space. Most Florida panthers will avoid a confrontation. Give them a way to escape.

If attacked, fight back with whatever is at hand (without turning your back). While there has never been a reported panther attack in Florida, in western states, potential victims have fought back successfully with rocks, sticks, caps, jackets, garden tools and even their bare hands. Since large cats usually try to bite the head or neck, try to remain standing and face the animal.

If you feel threatened by a panther or have lost pets or livestock to a panther, please call the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission at 1-888-404-3922.



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