

USFWS News Release

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For Immediate Release

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USFWS POSTS RARE VIDEO OF FLORIDA PANTHERS CLAW-MARKING LOGS

VERO BEACH, Fla. – Not too many people have seen a wild Florida panther claw-marking a log. Well, here's their chance. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's South Florida Office has posted rare video to its web site at www.fws.gov/verobeach of Florida panthers of both genders "claw-marking logs."

This **copyrighted video** was produced by Roy and Cougar McBride for initial display on the Southeastern Naturalist web site in conjunction with the publication of their biological note on claw-marking. The full title of this video is "*Photographic Evidence of Florida Panthers Claw-Marking Logs*" (Southeastern Naturalist, Volume 10, Number 2, 2011).

The video was shot with digital infra-red trail cameras on seven occasions from August 2009-April 2010. Based on a literature review and interviews with 11 professional puma hunters, the McBride's believe this video is the first photographic evidence of how wild Florida panthers claw-mark logs.

The purpose of the McBride's study was to document how Florida panthers claw-mark logs in an effort to determine if claw-marking is a gender-specific behavior.

According to the Defenders of Wildlife Publication "A Guide to Recognizing the Florida Panther," biologists believe that claw raking on horizontal logs, especially fallen cabbage palm, is much more commonly detected than panther raking on standing trees. Unlike black bear scent marking on trees, panther claw scratches are most often repeated, with two areas of scratching evident--corresponding to the grasping panther's forearms and paws working the log or tree trunk in unison.

A Florida panther rakes its claws on tree trunks to release scent from glands on its feet. This allows other cats to learn about the original cat that left the scent mark: its identity, status (dominant or subordinate), age, sex, reproductive state and spatial dimensions of its home range.

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