

News Release



April 29, 2015
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

\$5,000 REWARD FOR INFO ABOUT FLORIDA PANTHER SHOT IN COLLIER COUNTY

VERO BEACH, Fla. -- The U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) are offering a \$5,000 reward for information leading to the arrest and conviction of the person/persons responsible for shooting a Florida panther.

The adult Florida panther was reported as road-killed at about 8:30 p.m. on March 22, 2015, by passing motorists. The reporting party found the dead panther lying on the edge of Immokalee Road in Collier County about one mile west of Camp Keais Road. FWC Officers responded to the scene and follow-up investigation revealed that the panther had actually died as a result of a gunshot wound, and that there was no evidence that it had been struck by a vehicle.

Investigators with the USFWS and FWC are working cooperatively to identify the person/persons responsible for shooting this Florida panther, and are seeking assistance from the public in solving the crime. Anyone with information about this incident may call the FWC's 24-hour Wildlife Alert Hotline at 888-404-3922. For those wishing to remain anonymous, please use Tip@MyFWC.com or go online to MyFWC.com/WildlifeAlert.

The Florida panther is protected under the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (ESA), which currently lists the species as "endangered." This means the Florida panther is in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range. The ESA makes it unlawful for a person to take a listed animal without a permit. Take is defined as "to harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect or attempt to engage in any such conduct."

If convicted criminally, the federal penalty is up to one year of imprisonment, \$100,000 fine per individual or \$200,000 per organization.

In addition, State of Florida Statute 379.4115 makes it a third degree felony to kill a Florida panther. The state penalty is up to five years in jail and/or up to a \$5,000 fine.

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Note for reporters: This release contains virtually all of the releasable information about this case at this time. However, agency media contacts for information regarding the ongoing investigation are: USFWS, Ken Warren at (772) 469-4323 or ken_warren@fws.gov; and FWC, Diane Hirth at (850) 410-5291 or diane.hirth@myfwc.com.