

Vital Sign: Florida panther
[shortened name: Panther]

Parks Where Vital Sign will be Implemented:

BICY, EVER – SFCN summarizes reports from existing programs

Justification/Issues being addressed: The Florida panther (*Puma concolor coryi*) ranked 33rd among the SFCN vital signs. The Florida Panther is a top predator in South Florida, whose primary prey is deer, but also includes large fish, birds, feral hogs, etc. It is a federally endangered species that has been impacted by habitat loss and fragmentation, roadkill, contaminant bioaccumulation, and genetic bottlenecks. BICY, neighboring state lands, and portions of EVER are key areas for panther conservation and recovery. Monitoring information is used to assess panther populations, while distribution information is used to inform park managers about potential impacts of visitor use and management activities on panther distribution and relative activity levels.

General Monitoring Questions to be Addressed by the Vital Sign:

- What are the status and trends in Florida panther abundance, distribution, mortality, and recruitment?

Measures:

Population abundance, distribution, mortality, recruitment

Basic Approach:

Florida panthers are already monitored by existing parks and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. The SFCN community ecologist will request and review annual reports from FFWCC, which compile panther data from the South Florida parks and adjacent areas for a regional overview. Reports back to the mid 1990's are available to download at: <http://myfwc.com/panther/news/reports.html>. Those links would be provided and an abridged executive summary included in an SFCN annual report that would be post on the SFCN Intranet and Internet sites.

Principal Investigators/Key Contacts and NPS Lead:

- Deborah Jansen (BICY); (239) 695-1179; Deborah_Jansen@nps.gov
- Sonny Bass (EVER); (305) 242-7833; Sonny_Bass@nps.gov
- Mark Lotz & Darrell Land (FFWCC-Naples)
- Kevin Whelan, SFCN Community Ecologist; (305) 252-0347; Kevin_R_Whelan@nps.gov [SFCN lead]

Development schedule, budget, and expected interim products:

The SFCN Community Ecologist will request reports as they are produced and request permission to share those findings with others. SFCN will begin posting reports to the SFCN website by December 2008 together with brief summaries.

Expected SFCN staff time requirements once program is fully implemented in 5 years:

SFCN Staff	Full Time Equivalent (FTE)
Coordinator	
Marine Ecologist	
Fisheries Biologist	
Marine Biologist Technician (So FL)	
Marine Biologist Technician (VI)	
Community Ecologist	
Wildlife Technician (Wildlife)	
Wildlife Technician (Vegetation)	
Quantitative Ecologist	0.01
Data Manager	0.01
GIS/Data Tech	0.01
Interns	
SFCN Total	0.03