

# CONSERVATION FACT SHEET



## Florida Panther Program

The Florida Panther is a subspecies of the cougar whose last remaining population only exists in South Florida in less than 5% of its former range. Through historical bounties, habitat destruction, habitat fragmentation, genetic bottle-necking and road collisions, Florida Panthers are estimated to only have a total population of 100-150 individuals left. This is actually a recovered number for the species that was once believed to be down to a population in the 20s a couple decades ago. To remain viable, the current population would need to at least double in size. A major problem with this fact is that little suitable contiguous habitat remains, female panthers are slow to disperse, habitat destruction and roadway mortality continues, and male panthers aggressively maintain territories that are around 200 square miles.

Zoo Miami veterinary staff assists the biologists in the National Park Service and Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission staff in the Big Cypress National Preserve to conduct their monitoring of the resident Florida Panther population in the preserve. This ongoing monitoring program helps guide policymakers in managing the population, tracking mortality events, and learning about kitten survival.