



EXTENSION

Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences

Species in Danger of Extinction¹

Center for Natural Resources²

Countless species have gone extinct from natural processes. Unfortunately we can no longer attribute the accelerating extinction of plants and animals to natural causes. Today most species of plants and animals become extinct because of habitat destruction (loss of living space to development or pollution) introduction of non-native organisms, and direct killing (overharvesting, poisoning). Since the widespread settlement of Florida in the mid-1800s, at least 19 species of animals and 12 plants are believed to have become extinct.

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWCC) maintains the state list of 117 animals that are endangered, threatened, or species of special concern in Rules 39-27.003, 39-27.004 and 39-27.005, respectively, Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C.) The Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) maintains the state list of 413 plants that are endangered, threatened and commercially exploited via chapter 5B-40, F.A.C. The federal lists of animals and plants are administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and categorized into endangered and threatened, and are published in the Code of Federal Regulations

(CFR). 50 CFR, part 17, deals with animals and 50 CFR, part 23, deals with plants.

According to the USFWS listings, Florida trails only California and Hawaii, in numbers of listed endangered species. About 4 dozen other species are in as much jeopardy of extinction as those species already listed, and nearly half (44%) of all Florida vertebrates are known or suspected to be declining in number of distribution (Figure 1).



Figure 1. There are about 50 - 70 adult Florida panthers (*Panthera floridanus*) in the State (FWC, 2003).

Extinction occurs gradually. When an essential habitat component is diminished to a level insufficient for a species survival, that species

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2. This fact sheet was written by The Center for Natural Resources (CNR). Established in 1973, CNR, at the University of Florida, plays a major role in the conservation, preservation and restoration of our nation's natural resources by facilitating interdisciplinary collaborations between UF faculty and external stakeholders.

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becomes extinct in that area. From an individual site, extinction can then spread to township, county, state, national and global levels.

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352-846-2000

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School of Forest Resources & Conservation

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Other Contacts

Florida Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services

<http://doacs.state.fl.us/>

Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission

<http://southeast.fws.gov/maps/fl.html>

Florida Biological Diversity Project

941-947-3567

<http://www.wec.ufl.edu/coop/GAP/Default.htm>

Florida Internet Center for Understanding

<http://www.ficus.usf.edu/>

Florida Natural Areas Inventory

<http://www.fnai.org/>

National Audubon Society

<http://www.audubon.org/campaign/esa>

The Nature Conservancy - FL Chapter

<http://nature.org/wherewework/northamerica/states/florida/>

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

<http://www.fws.gov/>