

# NEWS FROM...



**FOR: IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**FROM: The Palm Beach Zoo**

**RE: CELEBRATE "SAVE THE FLORIDA PANTHER DAY" at the  
PALM BEACH ZOO**

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**March 6, 2008** – On Saturday, March 15<sup>th</sup> the Palm Beach Zoo will not only celebrate "Save the Florida Panther Day" but the birthday of their own Florida panther, "Colin Patrick" who was born on St. Patrick's Day thirteen years ago.

When "George", a Texas cougar and "Tayke", a Florida panther began living together in December 1994, no one expected anything unseemly to happen. After all, "George" had received two vasectomies. But on March 17, 1995 Palm Beach Zoo officials found the surprise of their life - "Tayke" had given birth to the spotted blue-eyed "Colin Patrick." Thirteen years later "Colin Patrick" is still calling the place of his birth home and can be seen in his habitat located in the Florida Pioneer Exhibit.



The day's activities will include Florida panther keeper talks, children's games and crafts, and giveaways with the highlight of the day occurring at 11:30 a.m. when "Colin Patrick" is presented with his "birthday cake." His birthday cake is lovingly made by his keepers and is created by using cardboard boxes, decorated with frozen fish candles, and filled with meat treats.

In 2007, Governor Charlie Crist designated the third Saturday in March as "Save the Panther Day." Governor Crist's proclamation emphasizes the fact that the Florida panther is a representation of the remarkable natural legacy Floridians treasure and that all such creatures should be protected for generations to come.

Why celebrate "Save the Florida Panther Day?" Historically occurring throughout the southeastern United States, today the panther is restricted to less than 5 percent of its historic range in one breeding population of fewer than 100

animals, located in Florida. As the top predator in its South Florida habitat, the panther is a necessary element in regulating the food chain. Predatory hunting by panthers helps keep the numbers of its prey--deer, wild hogs, and raccoon--in balance.

Predators such as panthers generally do not reduce the overall numbers of healthy prey populations. Just the opposite is true. Because panthers stalk and kill individual prey animals very selectively, they cull the sick and weak animals, as well as the very old and very young. This helps improve the stock of the breeding prey population, reduces disease, and lowers the chance of passing on genetic defects. It also recycles nutrients within the ecosystem.

The Palm Beach Zoo is best known for its success in caring for big cats of all kinds. The Zoo's animal collection also includes four jaguars, two Malayan tigers, two ocelots and two serval cats.

Palm Beach Zoo is located at 1301 Summit Boulevard, just east of I-95 between Southern and Forest Hill Boulevard. Regular zoo admission: Regular \$12.95, Seniors 60+ \$9.95, Children 3-12 \$8.95, under 3 years and Zoo Members are free. For more information regarding the Palm Beach Zoo, please visit [www.palmbeachzoo.org](http://www.palmbeachzoo.org).

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