

Project Update: August 2003

During the study period, twelve Geoffroy's cat were captured (and five recaptured). Except one female which was in poor condition, the rest of the sampled individuals were in good physical condition, and no ectoparasites were found on them. One male Geoffroy's cat and nine females were collared for subsequent tracking. All the captured cats remained relatively calm during the approach and sedation processes.

The lack of Pampas's cat trapping success suggests that there is some inherent behaviour that makes this species wary of enclosure traps and thus difficult to capture for collaring. Other capture attempts failed in other parts of South America. As a result, no pampas cat have been collared and tracked to date. Pampas's cat exhibited a relatively low density in our study area during the study period, and only one visual sighting of this species could be obtained in May 2003. During 2002, this situation was very different, and Geoffroy's cats and Pampas's cat could be observed continuously.

Local climate pattern in the Lihue Calel National Park has experienced a notorious change in the last years. Although January-June period constitutes the wet season in the area, almost no rain was produced this year. We found some evidence to suspect that prey availability was very low during the first half of 2003. Geoffroy's cats have been described as less sensitive to environmental disturbances than Pampas's cats and, as a result, this situation could be affected Pampas's cats more than Geoffroy's cats.

