

BIG CAT RIDDLE - Panthers in Florida suffer mystery crippling illness leaving the beasts falling out

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Mystery surrounds what is crippling panthers in Florida after footage showed some of the beasts struggling to walk. Wildlife experts from the southern state have confirmed at least nine are known to have developed problems moving about but many more could be afflicted.

This young panther can clearly be seen struggling to walk

This video clip shows the beast suffering from a hitch

The condition appears to affect the back legs

The endangered animals, which are a subspecies of the cougar and are no relation to panthers in Asia and Africa, are increasingly under threat from increasing road traffic.

But some fear the new condition causing them to stumble and tumble from trees imperils their future.

One bobcat is also known to have developed the same bizarre symptoms.

Gil McRae, director of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, said: "While the number of animals exhibiting these symptoms is relatively few, we are increasing monitoring efforts to determine the full scope of the issue.

Numerous diseases and possible causes have been ruled out. But a definitive cause has not yet been determined.

We're working with the US Fish and Wildlife Service and a wide array of experts from around the world to determine what is causing this condition.

As part of the investigation, animals are to be tested for various potential toxins, including rat pesticide, as well as infectious diseases and nutritional deficiencies.

Cameras are also being installed to try to find out how many more panthers are being blighted by the mystery condition.

Local people are being asked to submit videos that happen to capture animals with rear leg problems.

It comes after world's rarest leopard was caught on camera this week feeding in the wild for the first time in astonishing never before seen photos.

The rare strawberry leopard was snapped by a motion-triggered camera pinned to a tree in Thaba Tholo Wilderness Reserve, South Africa.

Incredible pics show a strawberry leopard feeding in the wild for the first time ever

The snaps were captured using a motion sensor camera trap

- The Sun