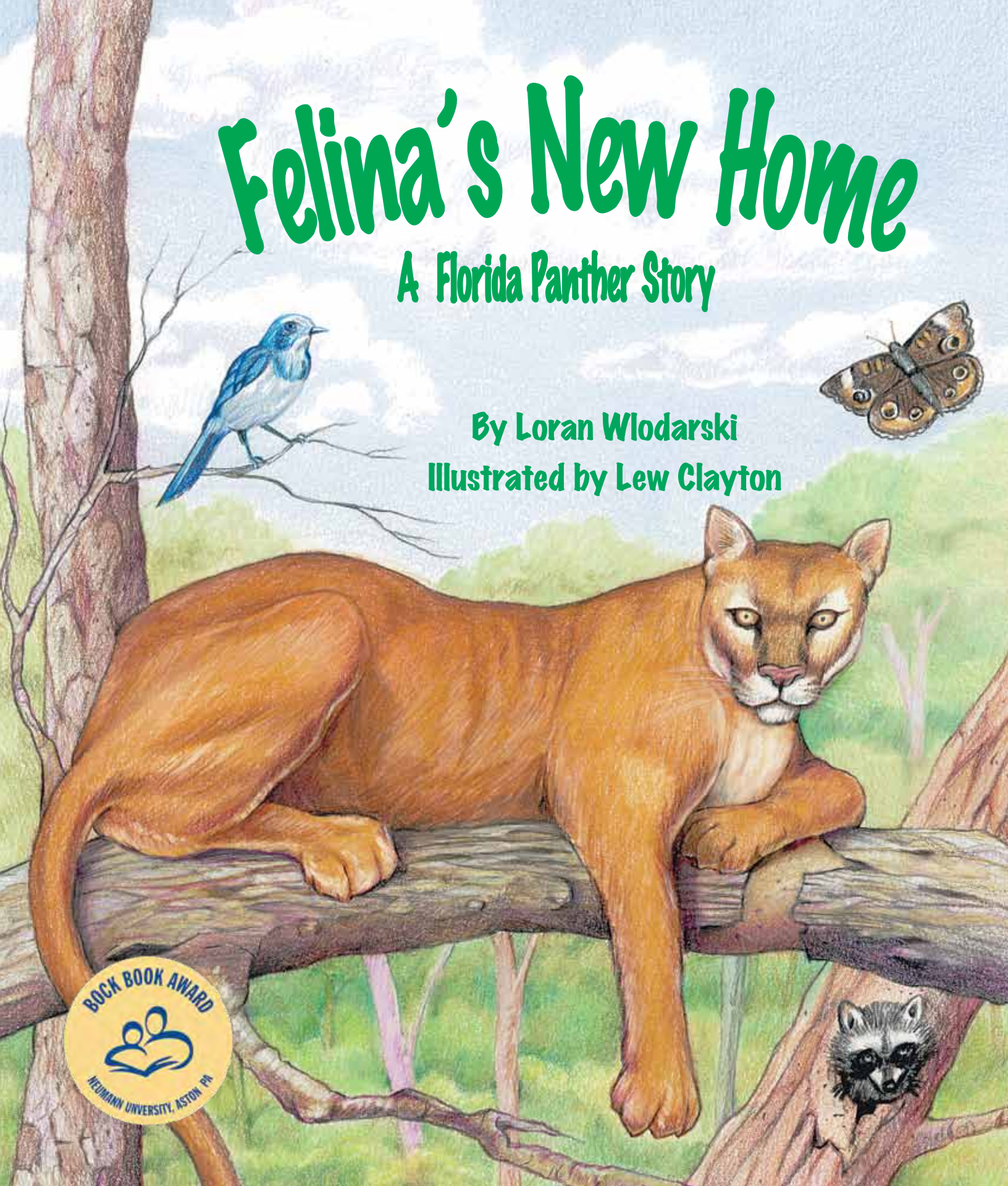


Felina's New Home

A Florida Panther Story

By Loran Wlodarski

Illustrated by Lew Clayton



Felina's New Home

A Florida Panther Story



Felina the Florida panther's forest is shrinking! Not only are trees disappearing, but a busy road with fast-moving cars makes it hard for animals to get to food on the other side. Readers learn about six threatened or endangered animals. These animals face the same problems as other animals all over the world. How does Felina get the help she needs?

Animals in the book include:

- Florida panther
- American crocodile
- Red-cockaded woodpecker
- West Indian manatee
- Wood stork
- Gopher tortoise

It's so much more than a picture book . . . this book is specifically designed to be both a fun-to-read story and a launch pad for discussions and learning. Whether read at home or in a classroom, we encourage adults to do the activities with the young children in their lives. Free online resources and support at www.ArbordalePublishing.com include:

- For Creative Minds as seen in the book (in English & Spanish):
 - Florida Panther Fun Facts
 - Florida Panther Life Cycle
 - Endangered and Threatened Animals
 - Match the Animal Information
- Teaching Activities:
 - Reading Questions
 - Language Arts
 - Science
 - Math
 - Geography
 - Coloring Pages
- Interactive Quizzes: Reading Comprehension, For Creative Minds, and Math Word Problems
- English and Spanish Audiobooks
- Related Websites
- Aligned to State Standards (searchable database)
- Accelerated Reader and Reading Counts Quizzes
- Lexile and Fountas & Pinnell Reading Levels

eBooks with Auto-Flip, Auto-Read, and selectable English and Spanish text and audio available for purchase online.

Thanks to Deborah Jansen, Wildlife Biologist, and Lisa Andrews, Outreach/Education Specialist at Big Cypress National Preserve; and to David Shindle, Biologist at the Conservancy of Southwest Florida, for verifying the accuracy of the information in this book.

Loran Wlodarski is the author of the award-winning *If a Dolphin Were a Fish* and *Felina's New Home* for Arbordale, as well as *Wild Careers! Working with Animals*, *Sharks! From Fear to Fascination*; and *Killer Whales: Creatures of Legend and Wonder*. He has been published in sources such as Grolier's Encyclopedia for Children and The Marine Mammal Encyclopedia. In addition, he has served as a scientific consultant for *Ask Magazine*, Random House Books, Animal Planet, Ripley's Believe It Or Not, and "Who Wants to be a Millionaire." Loran has raised animals his entire life. One of his early jobs at SeaWorld's education department was to raise some of their animals—newly hatched sharks, macaws, turtles, tropical fish, and iguanas. Loran lives with his wife and child in Florida.

Lew Clayton has worked as an illustrator and graphic designer for 20 years and is a member of the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators. Lew illustrated *Felina's New Home* with his medium of choice, Prismacolor colored pencils. His love of nature and animals is evident. Lew and his family live in Central Florida



Loran Wlodarski

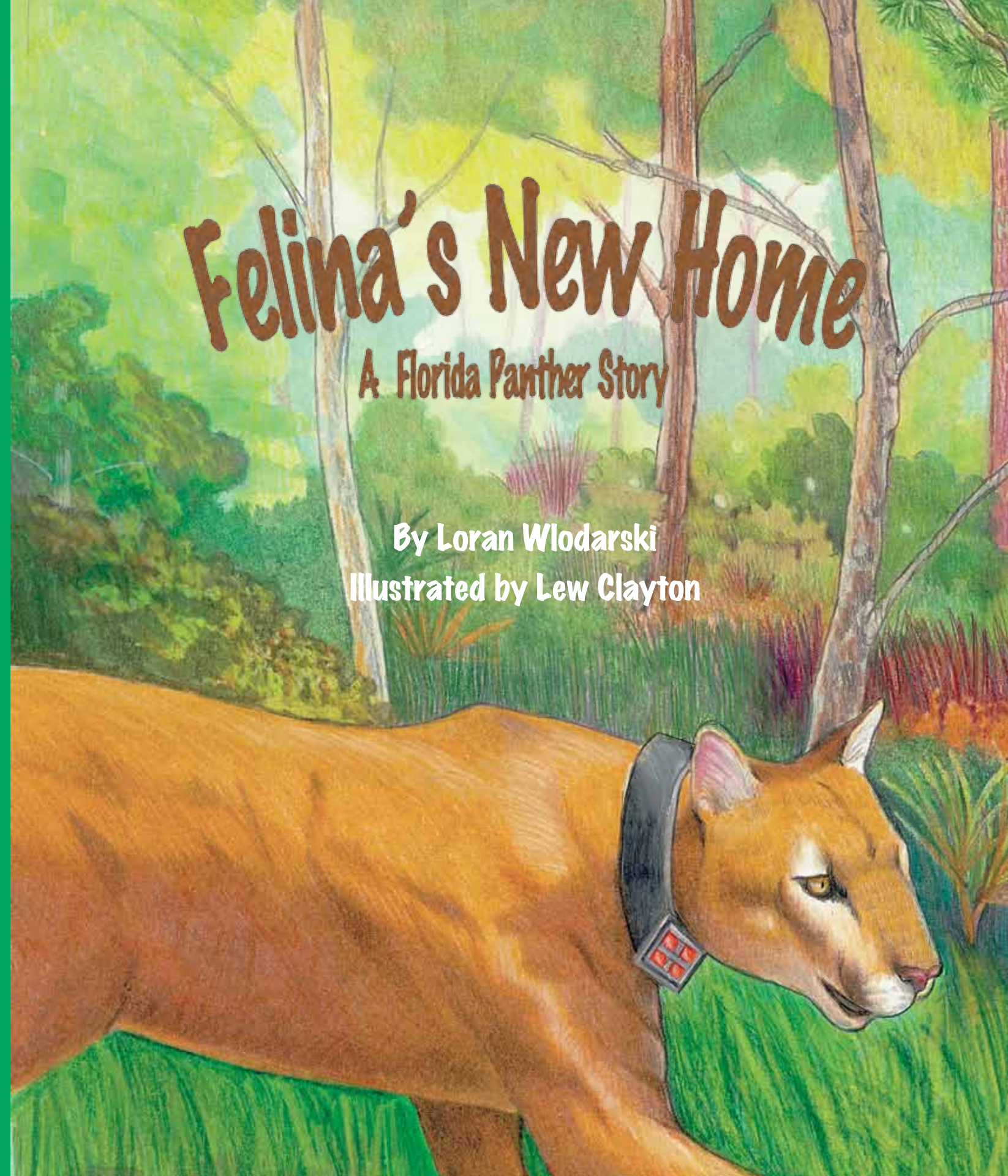


Lew Clayton

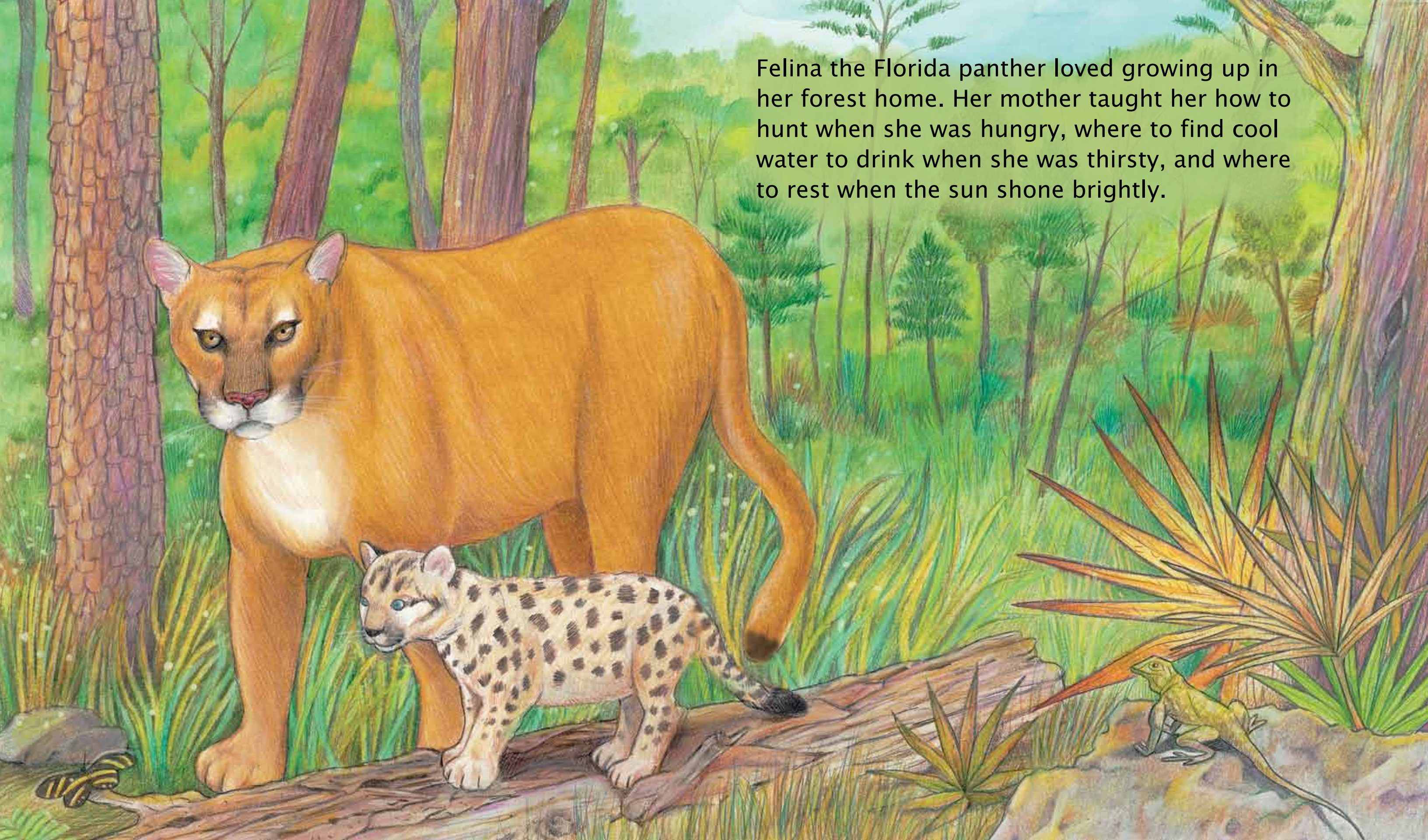
Felina's New Home

A Florida Panther Story

By Loran Wlodarski
Illustrated by Lew Clayton



Felina the Florida panther loved growing up in her forest home. Her mother taught her how to hunt when she was hungry, where to find cool water to drink when she was thirsty, and where to rest when the sun shone brightly.



Felina was growing, but it seemed her forest was shrinking! One day, she went to take a nap under her favorite trees, but the trees had vanished!

“Without my trees to shade me, where can I rest?”

Felina mumbled.

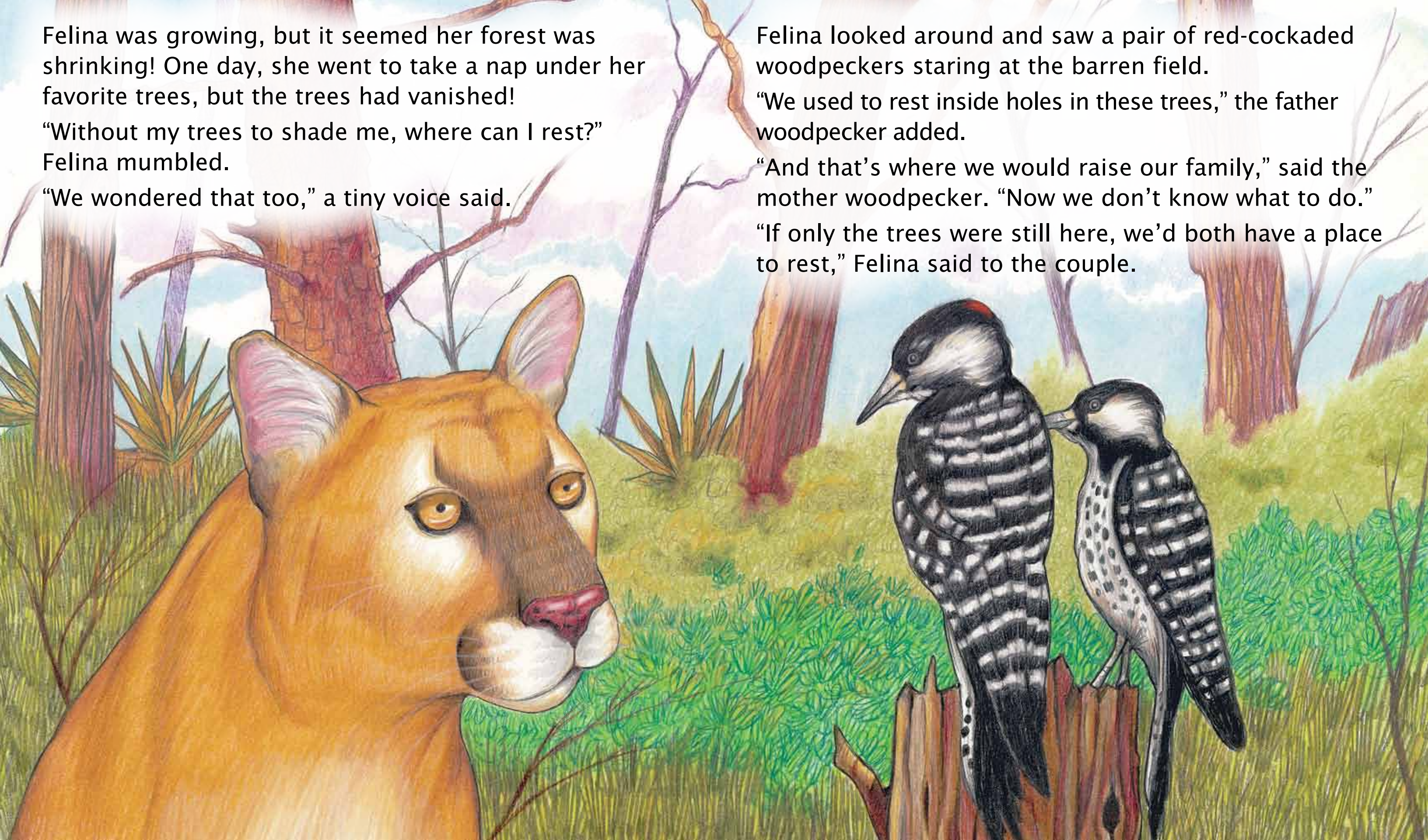
“We wondered that too,” a tiny voice said.

Felina looked around and saw a pair of red-cockaded woodpeckers staring at the barren field.

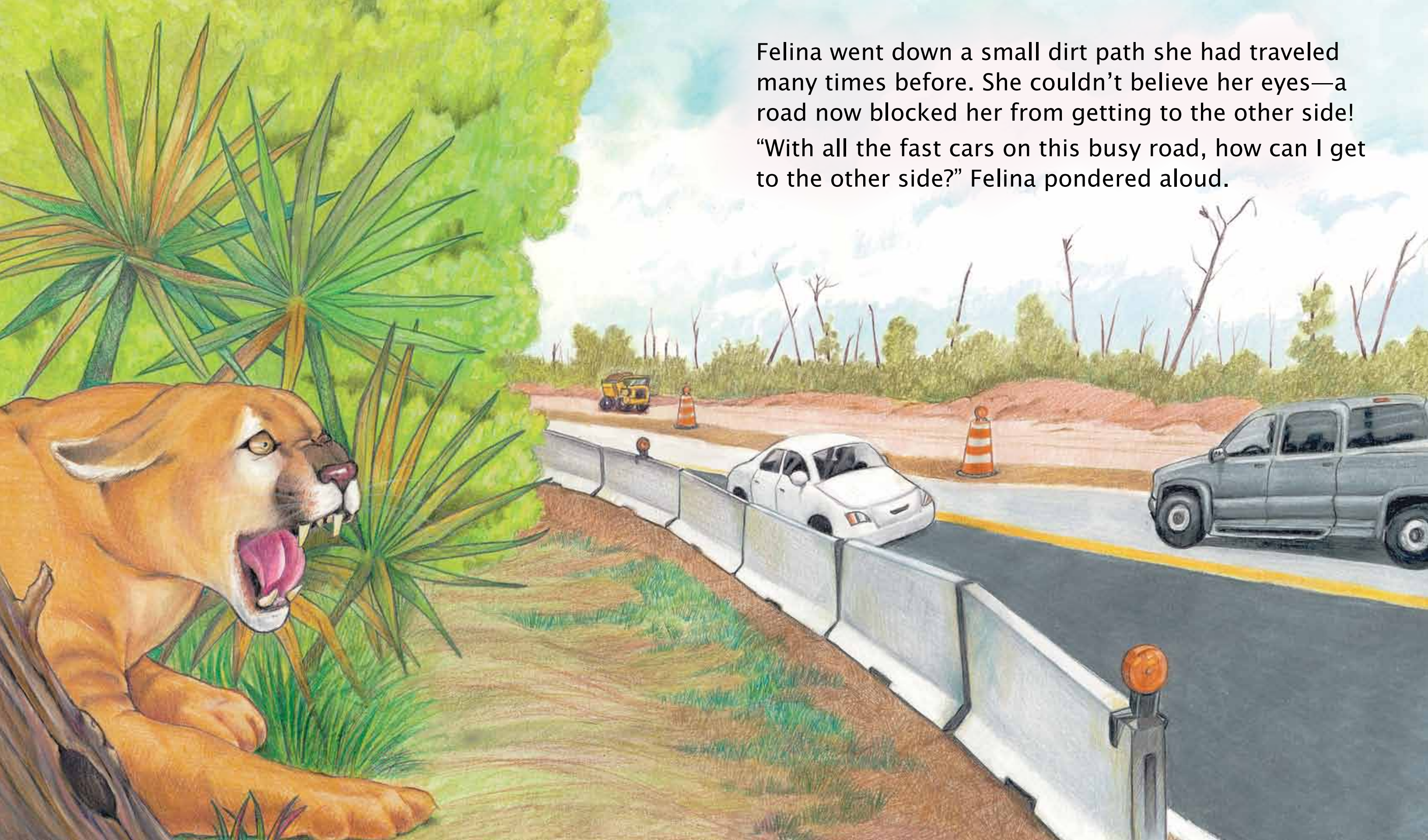
“We used to rest inside holes in these trees,” the father woodpecker added.

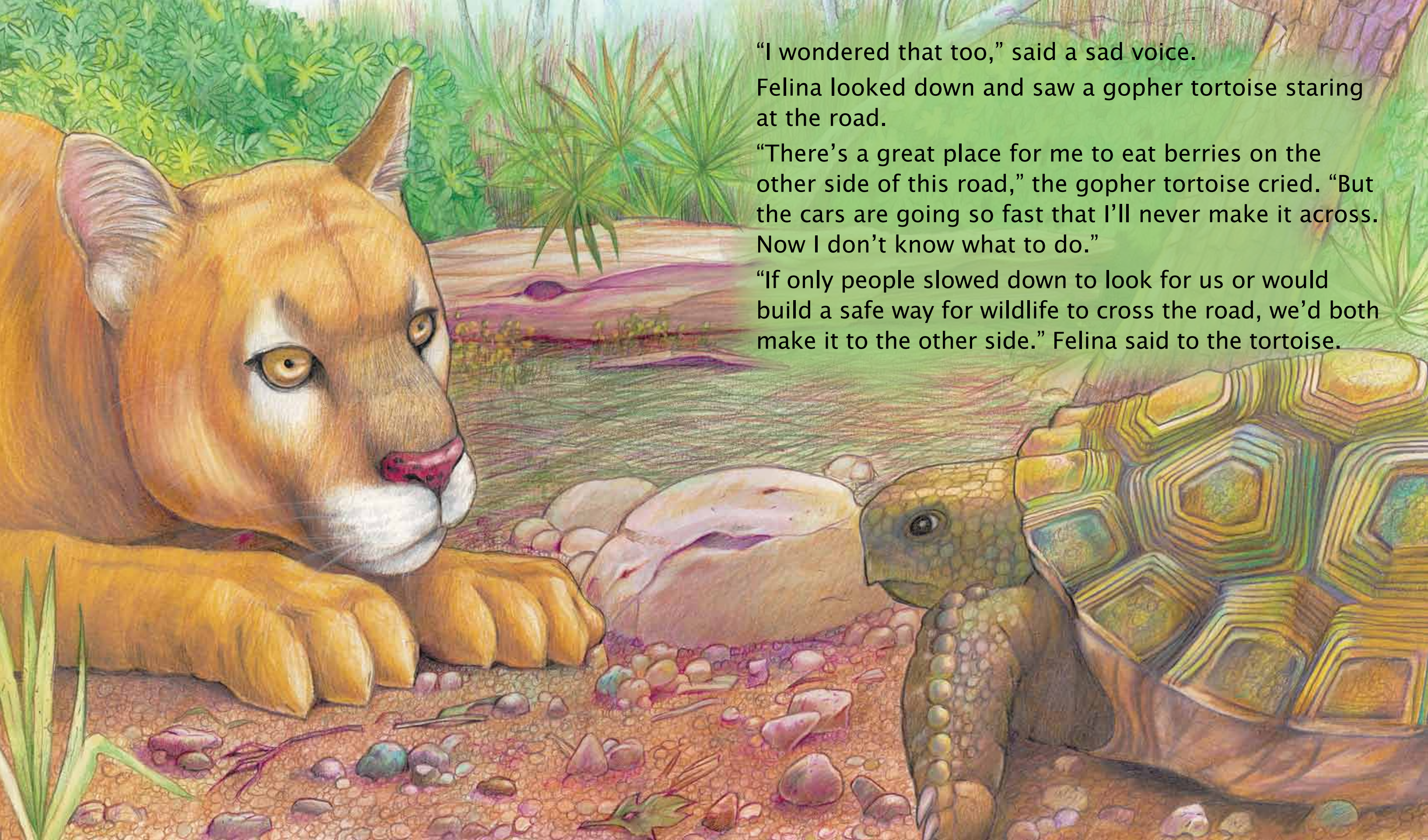
“And that’s where we would raise our family,” said the mother woodpecker. “Now we don’t know what to do.”

“If only the trees were still here, we’d both have a place to rest,” Felina said to the couple.



Felina went down a small dirt path she had traveled many times before. She couldn't believe her eyes—a road now blocked her from getting to the other side! “With all the fast cars on this busy road, how can I get to the other side?” Felina pondered aloud.





“I wondered that too,” said a sad voice.

Felina looked down and saw a gopher tortoise staring at the road.

“There’s a great place for me to eat berries on the other side of this road,” the gopher tortoise cried. “But the cars are going so fast that I’ll never make it across. Now I don’t know what to do.”

“If only people slowed down to look for us or would build a safe way for wildlife to cross the road, we’d both make it to the other side.” Felina said to the tortoise.

For Creative Minds

The For Creative Minds educational section may be photocopied or printed from our website by the owner of this book for educational, non-commercial uses. Cross-curricular teaching activities, interactive quizzes, and more are available online. Go to www.ArbordalePublishing.com and click on the book's cover to find all the links.

Florida Panther Fun Facts

Panther, cougar, mountain lion, and puma are all names for the same type of animal from the feline family. They are related to pet cats, as well as to tigers, cheetahs, jaguars, and bobcats. They even purr like other small cats!

Like pet cats, Florida panthers have sharp claws that can be in or out (retractable). They use these claws to grab their prey: deer, wild hogs, raccoons, rabbits, and armadillos.

If they catch a large meal, they may eat it over several days. If so, they will frequently cover it with leaves and sticks to keep it fresh and hidden from other scavengers.

Their scientific genus name, *concolor*, means "one color." That's because their fur is all one color—similar to deer, their favorite prey. Their chests are a little lighter in color.

Adult Florida panthers live by themselves and are very territorial. Each adult may use up to 200 square miles for his/her own territory. A male panther's home range overlaps with the smaller home ranges of several females.

Their habitats include both dry and wet land: cypress forests, swamps, freshwater marshes, hardwood hammocks, and woods. They prefer areas with lots of cover and lots of prey (food).

Florida Panther Life Cycle

Panthers can mate throughout the year, but most young are born in May and June.

A female usually mates for the first time when she is two years old. She will leave urine scents to let males know when she is ready. She may be heard screaming, probably because she is uncomfortable.

She will be pregnant with her kittens for about three months during which time she'll select a den in a well protected spot, usually in dense saw palmetto thickets.

The kittens are born with blue eyes and spots that help them hide while in the den. They drink their mothers' milk until they are about two months old and then they start to follow their mother out of the den (unless she is hunting).

By the time the kittens are six months old, their eyes have turned brown and their spots have faded.

At nine months, they are hunting small animals by themselves.

When they are about a year and a half, they will leave their mother and find their own territory.

Florida panthers may live to be about 12 years old, if they are lucky.

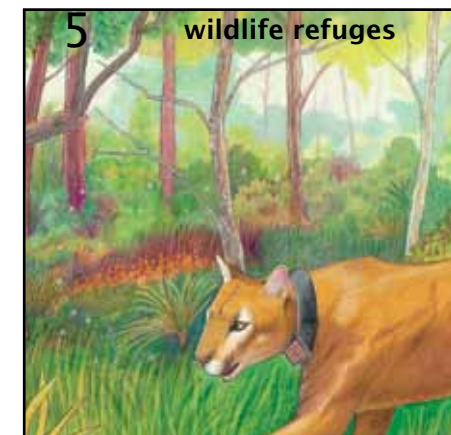
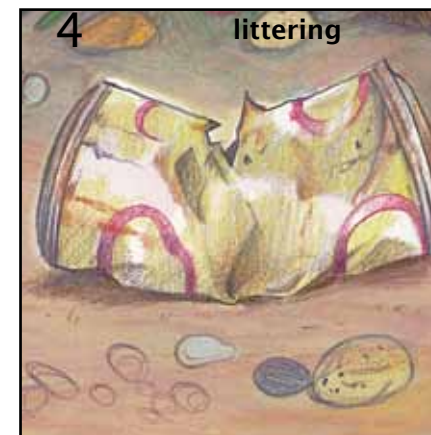
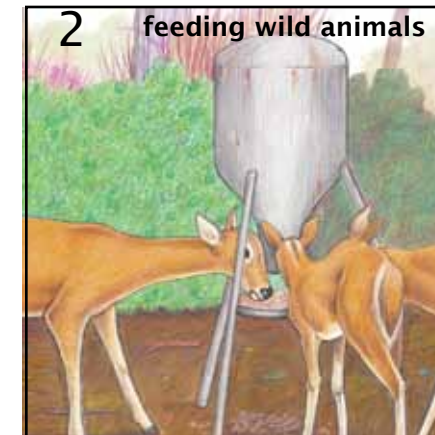
Endangered and Threatened Animals

Threatened: A species in trouble—it may become endangered if people don't help out.

Endangered: A species in a lot of trouble—it may become extinct if people don't help out.

Extinct: A species we'll never see again—extinction is forever.

The animals Felina "talks to" in this book are either endangered or threatened. Decide if the pictures shown below represent things that hurt or help animals. Answers are upside down at the bottom of the page.



1. Rehabilitation programs are designed to **help** injured animals and to hopefully return them to the wild. Sometimes injured animals cannot survive on their own, even after rehabilitation. Those animals are often sent to zoos and aquariums where they live safely.
2. Feeding wild animals can **hurt** them. Not only do they stop getting their own food, but people food can make them sick. And, because they are used to human food, they may wander into inhabited areas where they can get hurt by people or they might hurt people. Growing native plants and feeding songbirds seeds and grains that they would normally eat can **help** them. Feeding birds bread or other people food **hurts** them.
3. Busy roads going through wild animals' habitats can **hurt** the animals. They might get hit by cars or they may be unable to reach feeding or nesting areas. People have built wildlife underpasses in some areas so that wild animals can safely cross under the road.
4. Littering **hurts** animals. Some animals cut themselves on trash or can get trapped in garbage. Sometimes they eat trash (like plastic bags or balloons) thinking that it's food, and it can make them sick or even kill them.
5. Wildlife refuges help by providing a safe place for wild animals to live.

Match the Animal Information

Match the animal to its description, animal class and what it eats. Answers are upside down on the next page.

If a baby animal drinks milk from its mother, breathes oxygen from the air through lungs, and has hair or fur at some point in its life, it is a mammal. If an animal has feathers, it is a bird. Birds breathe oxygen from the air and hatch from eggs. If an animal breathes oxygen from the air and has scales, it is a reptile. Most reptiles hatch from eggs. All of the animals mentioned in this book have lungs to breathe oxygen from the air.

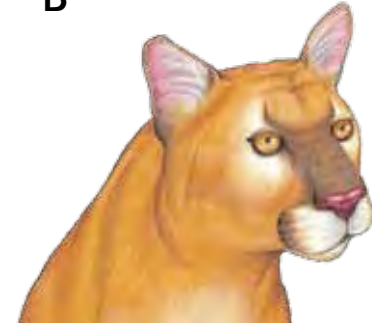
Animals that only eat meat (other animals) are called carnivores. Animals that only eat plants are called herbivores. Animals that eat both plants and meat are called omnivores.

A Gopher tortoise



Gopherus polyphemus

B Florida panther



Puma concolor coryi

C Red-cockaded Woodpeckers



Picoides borealis

D Manatee



Trichechus manatus

E Wood stork



Mycteria americana

F American crocodile



Crocodylus acutus

1 There are fewer than 100 of these animals left in the wild. North American Cougars roam the western half of the US and Canada and most of Central and South America. Separated from the cougars, this sub-species are the only cougars found east of the Mississippi and are isolated in the very southern part of Florida due to hunting and habitat loss. Several animals are hit by cars as they try to cross busy roads. People have built wildlife underpasses to help them safely cross roads. Kittens are born with spotted fur and nurse from their mothers. Like all cats, they hunt other animals for their food.

2 Their feathers are black and white but adult males have a little red spot on their heads, called a cockade. A family will peck a pine tree, usually a longleaf pine that has a fungus disease, making it easier to peck the wood. Unfortunately, the fungus needs old trees, and most of the trees were cut down by the early European settlers for farming or ship masts. It takes 100 to 150 years for new trees to grow, and seeds sprout only after a fire. Until recently, people put out the fires, making it difficult for the seedlings to sprout and grow. The animals peck holes around the nest that drip sap so that rat snakes can't reach the hatchlings. Males tend to stay with their families but females leave to start their own families. These animals eat insects, bugs, fruit and seeds.

3 These animals live in a variety of dry habitats with loose, dry, and sandy soil. Using their clawed, shovel-like front feet, they dig burrows averaging 4.5 meters (14.8 feet) in length and 2 meters (6.6 feet) in depth. This type of turtle is also called an "apex species," because many other animals or plants in their ecosystem depend on them to survive. Over 300 different types of animals rely on the turtle's burrow for their home—either while the animal lives there or after it is abandoned. Females lay eggs in the late spring to early summer and the hatchlings will spend the following winter in or around the mother's burrow. These animals eat low-growing grasses, legumes, and fruit.

4 Adults stand an average of just over 3 feet (1 m) tall and have a wingspan of just under 5 feet (1.5 m). They have white feathers with black tips, very long legs for standing in the marshy water where they live, and a long, sharp bill. Their unusual hunting behavior is called grope-feeding. They keep their open bills in the water and wait for fish to swim in. As soon as they sense movement, they clamp their bill on the fish and enjoy a tasty meal. A male and female pair build their nest high in a tree that is close to water. The female will usually lay two to five eggs. Both parents will incubate the eggs for about a month. After the chicks are born, the parents feed them with fish they eat and then throw up. Chicks learn to fly when they are about nine weeks old.

5 These animals were overhunted for their tough, scaly backs and smooth belly skin used to make pocketbooks and shoes. The main danger to these animals today is habitat loss and being hit by cars if crossing roads. They live primarily in coastal mangrove swamps, but may also be found in inland ponds and canals. A female will build a nest out of loose dirt at the water's edge and will lay 20-50 eggs in April or May. She will guard them closely until they hatch in July or August and will carry them to the water, after which they survive on their own (instinct). They eat fish and other water-living animals as well as some birds, reptiles, and small mammals.

6 It is said that ancient sailors thought these animals were mermaids. Even though these large animals live in the ocean and coastal rivers and canals, they breathe air through lungs, just like we do, coming to the surface for oxygen every few minutes. These slow-moving creatures can be up to 12 feet (3.66 meters) long! A female may have a calf every two to five years. Calves nurse from their mothers for a long time, up to two years. Sometimes these animals are hurt and killed by very cold weather, pollution, habitat loss and people in boats not watching for them or not obeying posted boat speed warnings. Feeding them may put them at greater risk of harm by causing them to lose fear of humans. Often called "sea cows," these animals spend much of their time grazing underwater plants.

Match the Animals Answers: 1B, 2C, 3A, 4E, 5F, 6D

Animal Classes

- Mammals: Florida panther, Manatee
- Birds: Red-cockaded Woodpecker, Wood stork
- Reptiles: Gopher tortoise, American crocodile

What they eat

- Carnivores: Florida panther, American crocodile, Wood stork
- Herbivores: Gopher tortoise, Manatee
- Omnivores: Red-cockaded Woodpecker

Thanks to Deborah Jansen, Wildlife Biologist, and Lisa Andrews, Outreach/Education Specialist at Big Cypress National Preserve; and to David Shindle, Biologist at the Conservancy of Southwest Florida, for verifying the accuracy of the information in this book.

Publisher's Cataloging-In-Publication Data

Wlodarski, Loran.

Felina's new home : a Florida panther story / by Loran Wlodarski ; illustrated by Lew Clayton.

p. : col. ill. ; cm.

Summary: Felina the Florida panther loved growing up in her forest home--until the forest started to shrink. Learn whether Felina and the other forest animals adapt to the new human presence and what children can do to keep wild animals safe, happy, and healthy. Includes "For Creative Minds" section.

Interest level: 4-8

Grade level: P-3

Lexile Level: 810, Lexile Code: AD

ISBN: 978-1-60718-068-5 English hardcover

ISBN: 978-1-60718-867-4 English paperback

ISBN: 978-1-60718-093-7 English eBook (downloadable)

ISBN: 978-1-60718-104-0 Spanish eBook (downloadable)

ISBN: 978-1-60718-292-4 Interactive, read-aloud eBook featuring selectable English and Spanish text and audio (web and iPad/tablet based)

1. Florida panther--Habitat--Juvenile fiction. 2. Deforestation--Juvenile fiction. 3. Endangered species--Juvenile fiction. 4. Florida panther--Habitat--Fiction. 5. Deforestation--Fiction. 6. Endangered species--Fiction.

I. Clayton, Lew. II. Title.

PZ10.3.W714 Fe 2010

[Fic] 2009937785

Text Copyright 2010 © Loran Wlodarski

Illustration Copyright 2010 © Lew Clayton

The "For Creative Minds" educational section may be copied by the owner for personal use or by educators using copies in classroom settings.

Arbordale Publishing
formerly Sylvan Dell Publishing
Mt. Pleasant, SC
www.ArbordalePublishing.com



If you enjoy this book,
look for other Arbordale books that may also be of interest:



Includes 4 pages of
learning activities.

Look for more free activities
online at

www.ArbordalePublishing.com