



# Herald-Tribune

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## Legacy Trail rider sights Florida Panther in Palmer Ranch

SARASOTA COUNTY - Julie Shroyer was riding her bicycle north on the Legacy Trail on New Year's Day when she spotted what she believes was a Florida Panther.

At about 8 a.m., north of [Oscar Scherer State Park](#) and south of Central Sarasota Parkway - near where the Legacy Estates subdivision is under construction at Palmer Ranch - Shroyer saw an animal about 100 yards up the path.

I thought, 'That doesn't look like a dog or a Golden Retriever' - I used to have one - and the behavior was very different," Shroyer said.

The animal was big and tan and kind of slinked when it walked. "Not like a dog," she added. "A dog is fully upright when he walks."

"I was quite a ways away. I think he probably saw me and was off the trail to the east."

Shroyer sent a note to the [Friends of the Legacy Trail Facebook page](#), to let the group know that a big cat may be in the area.

John League, a board member with the Friends of the Legacy Trail, said that as development near the trail continues - particularly south of State Road 681 - there has been an increase in wildlife sightings on the trail,

though mostly alligators, snakes and bobcats.

Shroyer, who moved to the area from California almost four years ago, called nearby Oscar Scherer State Park. She was told there had been anecdotal reports, but no confirmed sightings.

Shroyer, who regularly rides the trail, said she doesn't believe the animal she encountered was a bobcat.

"This was much larger. I see bobcats all the time -- they're tiny compared to this," Shroyer said. "This, I'm thinking 130 pounds or something.

"He was pacing slightly," she added. "Once I realized what I thought it was, I kind of slowed down and did not get a picture, but it was quite a ways away."

More Info: [www.floridapanther.net.org](http://www.floridapanther.net.org).

*Article abbreviated - S.E..*