



Red Wolf Recovery Program

Public Information Meeting



Fall 2022





Red Wolf Recovery Program



Joe Madison,
NC Program Manager/
Wildlife Biologist



Ryan Nordsvén,
Wildlife Biologist



Morgan Lewis,
Wildlife Biologist



Luke Lokies,
Private Lands Biologist



Red Wolf Recovery Program

- Mission: Work with other to conserve, protect, and enhance the endangered red wolf
- Key Program Components
 - Captive Population
 - Wild Populations
 - Communications/Outreach
 - Research



Photo courtesy of Kirk Adams



2021-2022 Accomplishments



- Red Wolf Recovery Program Revitalization
- Management of the ENC RWP
- LA Canid Study
- Increased the Captive Population
- Recovery Team/Recovery Plan

Photo courtesy of Cassia Rivera



Red Wolf Captive Population

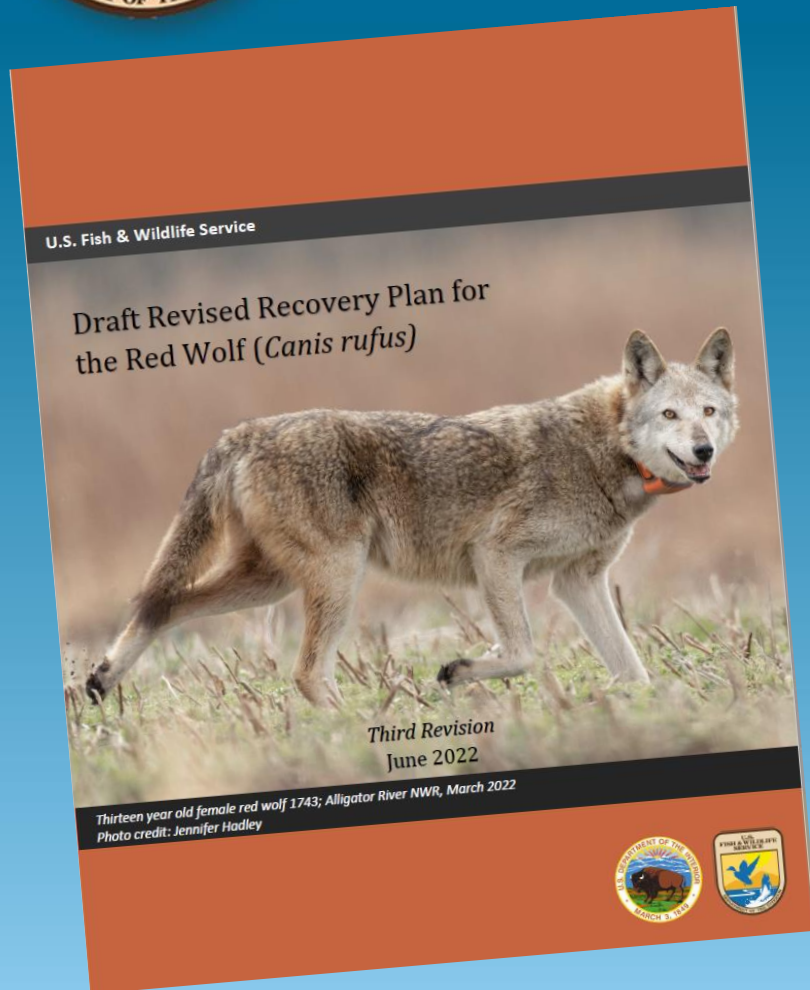
- 243 red wolves
- 49 facilities nationwide
- 28 breeding pairs; 46 pups in 13 litters (29 survived)
- 40 breeding pairs established for 2022-2023
- \$770,000+ matching funds = 30 enclosures



Photo courtesy of Kim Wheeler



Recovery Plan



- Previous Recovery Plans
 - 1982, 1984, 1990
- Recovery Team appointed in 2021
 - Diverse 51-member team
 - Task: Update RP
- Follows the Service's Current Guidance
 - Species Status Assessment
 - Recovery Plan
 - Recovery Implementation Strategy
- This draft Revised Recovery Plan is based on:
 - 2018 SSA
 - Recovery Team Workshop Report



Draft Recovery Plan

- Expand Distribution
 - Additional populations
 - Ideally different habitat types
 - PVA will help characterize sites
- Increase Population and Maintain Genetic Diversity Long-term
 - Robust captive population
 - Releases/pup fostering/translocations/ adaptive management
 - Not reliant on extensive human interventions
 - Address threats
- Implement Collaborative Conservation
 - Engage stakeholders in management
 - Shared understanding of goals, roles/responsibilities, and expectations



Photo courtesy of Robert Ondrish



Public Comment

- Draft Revised Recovery Plan:
 - <https://www.fws.gov/project/red-wolf-recovery-program>
 - <https://www.fws.gov/node/266264>
- To Comment:
 - Email: redwolf_comments@fws.gov
 - Subj: Comment on Draft Recovery Plan
 - Mail: Emily Weller
Red Wolf Recovery Program Coordinator
200 Dulles Drive
Lafayette, LA 70506
- Comment Period
 - October 28, 2022
 - Accept information about any species at any time
 - Comments received become part of the record



Photo courtesy of Leigh Gill



2022-2023 Goals



Photo courtesy of Kirk Adams

- Finalize Recovery Plan
- Develop recovery implementation strategy
- Increase the captive population
- Continue working collaboratively with the SSP/SAFE to maintain a captive population suitable for release
- Continue management of the ENC RWP
- Further program revitalization



Red Wolf Recovery Program

Eastern North Carolina Red Wolf Population (ENC RWP)



Photo courtesy of Jennifer Hadley



Red Wolf Recovery Program

Eastern North Carolina Red Wolf Population (ENC RWP)

- Continuing to operate under 10(j) rule updated in 1995, in conjunction with applicable court decisions
- In January 2021, the U.S. District Court issued a ruling for USFWS to “draft a plan to release captive red wolves” in NC
- FWS subsequently submitted and implemented Phase I and Phase II release plans covering March 2021 through May 2022
- Phase III release plan covering through May 2023 was coordinated with WRC and submitted to the court in September

RED WOLF COALITION v. United States Fish and Wildlife Service, Dist. Court, North Carolina 2018

RED WOLF COALITION, DEFENDERS OF WILDLIFE, and ANIMAL WELFARE INSTITUTE, Plaintiffs,

UNITED STATES FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE, JIM KURTZ, in his official capacity as Acting Director of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, and MIKE OFTEKER, in his official capacity as Acting Regional Director of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service Southeast Region, Defendants

No. 2:18-cv-0230

United States District Court, E.D. North Carolina, Northern Division

November 4, 2018.

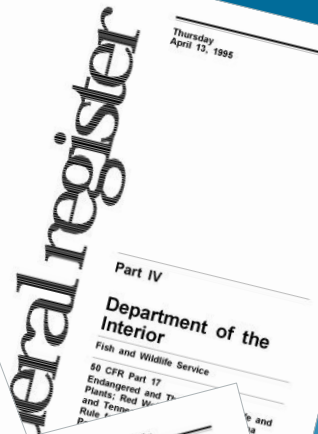
UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT, E.D. NORTH CAROLINA, NORTHERN DIVISION
 November 4, 2018.
 RED WOLF COALITION, DEFENDERS OF WILDLIFE, and ANIMAL WELFARE INSTITUTE, Plaintiffs, represented by the Southern Environmental Law Center, Sierra B. Weaver, Southern Environmental Law Center, Environmental Law Center, Jun-Ya Zhang, Southern Environmental Law Center.
 vs.
 UNITED STATES FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE, JIM KURTZ, in his official capacity as Acting Director of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, Southeast Region, and MIKE OFTEKER, in his official capacity as Acting Regional Director of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service Southeast Region, Defendants, represented by
 K. Loverson-Hammer, U.S. District Court, Eastern District of North Carolina, Northern Division, U.S. District Court, Eastern District of North Carolina, Northern Division, U.S. District Court, Eastern District of North Carolina, Northern Division.

Amended Plan to Release Red Wolves into the North Carolina Non-essential Experimental Population: Phase II



Photo courtesy of John Papp

United States Fish and Wildlife Service
 November 2021



Thursday
 April 15, 1995

Part IV
 Department of the
 Interior

Fish and Wildlife Service

50 CFR Part 17
 Endangered and Threatened Species
 Rulemaking

30. 2018 Proposed Rule

The Director (hereinafter referred to as the Director) is publishing this notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM) to solicit public comments on the proposed rulemaking to update the 10(j)(1)(B) rule for the Eastern North Carolina Red Wolf (ENCRW) population. The proposed rulemaking is part of the 10(j)(1)(B) rule for the ENCRW population, which is currently listed as an endangered species under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), 16 U.S.C. 1531. The proposed rulemaking is part of the 10(j)(1)(B) rule for the ENCRW population, which is currently listed as an endangered species under the ESA, 16 U.S.C. 1531. The proposed rulemaking is part of the 10(j)(1)(B) rule for the ENCRW population, which is currently listed as an endangered species under the ESA, 16 U.S.C. 1531.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
 UNITED STATES FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
401-775-1676
 4849 Lees Ferry Road
 Phoenix, AZ 85008
401-775-1676
 15000 E. Northway Road
 Denver, CO 80231
303-733-1318

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Eastern North Carolina Red Wolf Population

Existing Condition

- Currently 10 known (radio-collared) adult wild red wolves and 6 pups. All adults have orange VHF collars, 1 of which is also a GPS collar.
- Estimated total wild population of approximately 19 - 21 red wolves.



Photo courtesy of Ed Dailey



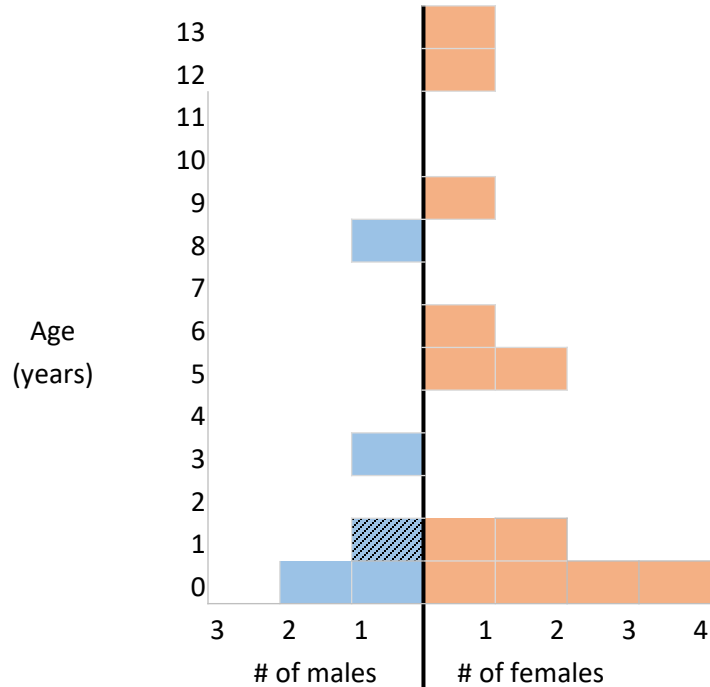
Eastern North Carolina Red Wolf Population Management Update

- 2019/2020 – translocated 1 adult male red wolf from St. Vincent NWR paired with a resident female and released on ARNWR
- 2021 – translocated 2 adult male red wolves from St. Vincent NWR paired with resident females
- 2021 – released 4 adult red wolves (2 newly formed pairs) from captive breeding facilities
- Spring 2021 fostered 4 pups from a captive-born litter into the litter of a wild red wolf mother





Eastern North Carolina Red Wolf Population Existing Condition



Wild Red Wolf Age Structure

- 1 known wild red wolf litter in 2022 – first since 2018
- 13 known red wolf mortalities in the wild in last 2 years
- 1 known hybrid litter in 2022, 3 in 2021
- Age structure



Eastern North Carolina Red Wolf Population Mortalities

Of the 13 mortalities, 11 were captive born releases

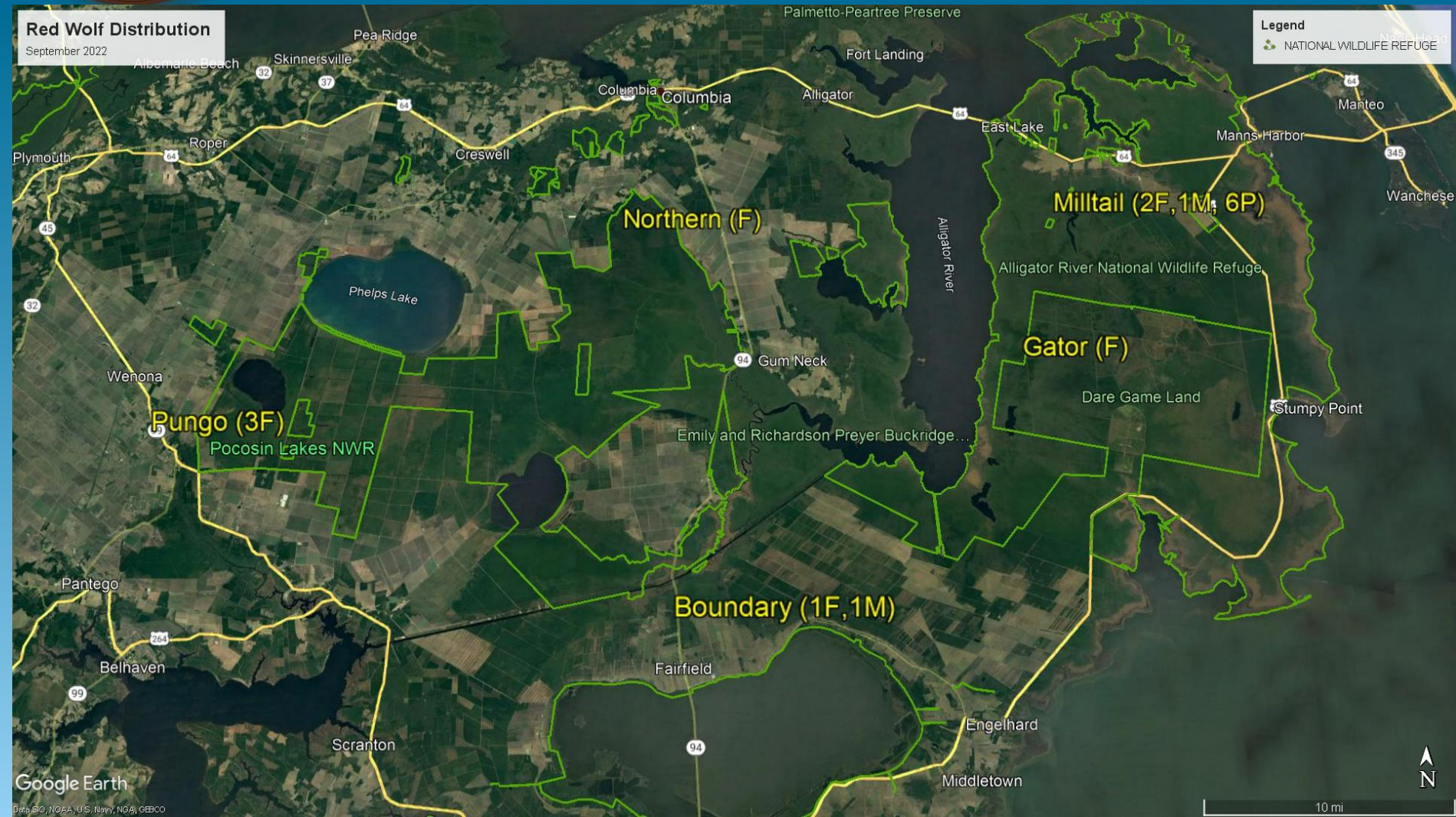
- 5 vehicle strikes
- 3 gunshot
- 3 unknown –
 - 1 necropsy results pending
 - 2 necropsy results inconclusive
- 2 suspected vehicle strike – necropsy pending





Eastern North Carolina Red Wolf Population

Current Distribution





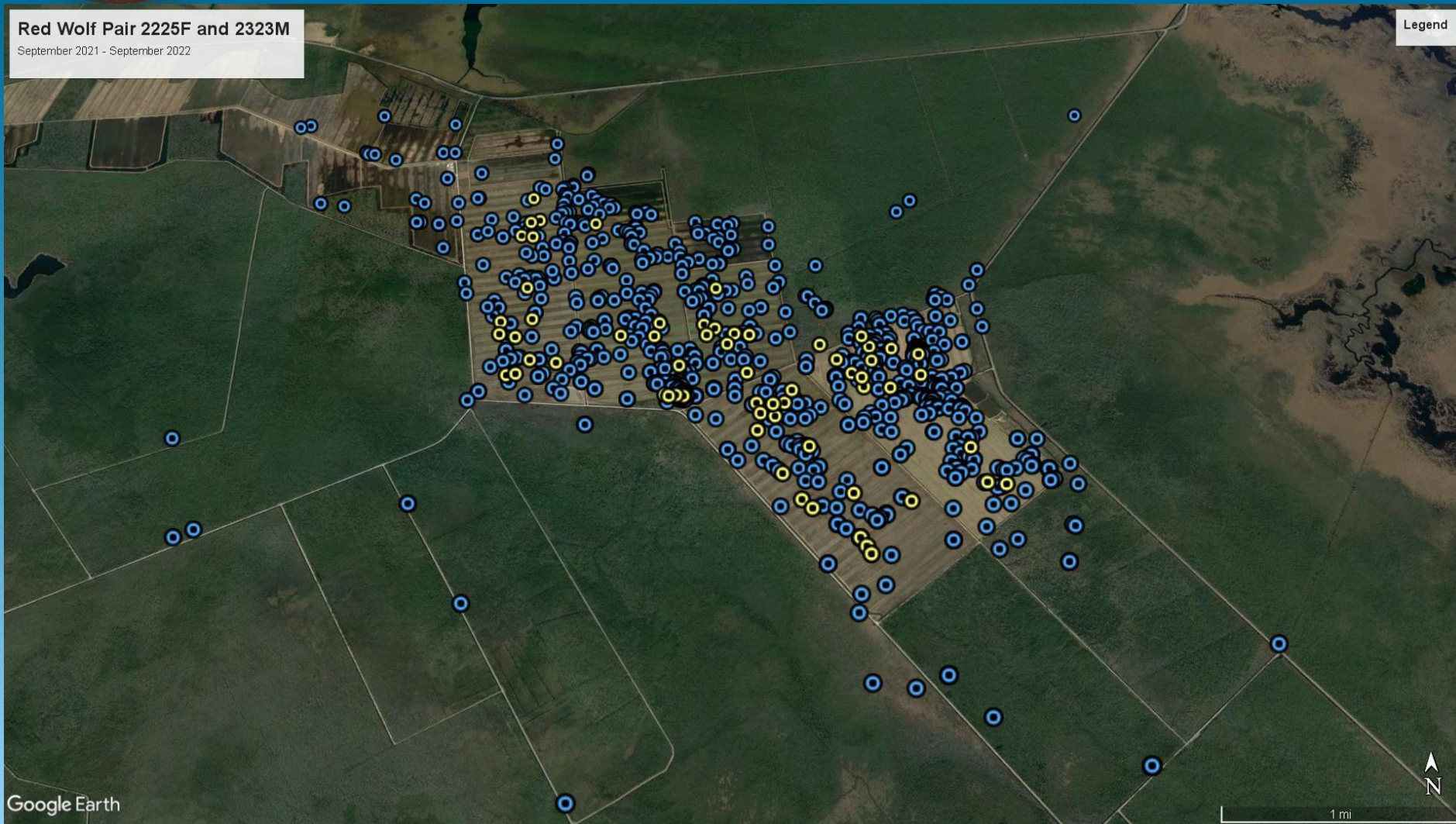
Eastern North Carolina Red Wolf Population Current Distribution

2225F and 2323M – about 15 square miles

Red Wolf Pair 2225F and 2323M

September 2021 - September 2022

Legend





Eastern North Carolina Red Wolf Population Current Distribution

2280F – about 10 square miles





Eastern North Carolina Red Wolf Population Current Distribution

2197F – about 15 square miles





Eastern North Carolina Red Wolf Population Management Update

- February 1 – Hosted virtual public meeting
 - Red wolf recovery
 - Upcoming releases
 - Coyote sterilization
 - Prey for the Pack (P4P)
 - Increase community engagement
- Announced recommitment to Red Wolf Recovery Program, including the ENC RWP

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service



The Future of Red Wolf Releases in Eastern North Carolina: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Virtual Informational Meeting Tuesday, February 1, 2022, 7-9 pm ET

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service looks forward to engaging with you, because we need you, and America's red wolf needs you too!

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) is working under a federal court order to implement its Red Wolf Release Plan this winter. We know that the success of our red wolf program in North Carolina will depend largely on how well we can partner and communicate with landowners, the state of North Carolina, and the community. We also know that folks may have questions and concerns about the release program. We want to provide information, listen to your concerns, and to open lines of communication between the Service and the public.

On Tuesday, February 1, 2022, the Service will hold a virtual informational meeting of nine red wolves to Service refuges, and upcoming court-ordered release of the nonessential experimental population (NEP) of Beaufort, Dare, Hyde, Linnell, and Washington of eastern North Carolina. The virtual informational meeting will be held from 7 to 9 pm ET and will be held via the Zoom online platform and telepresence so that participants can attend remotely. Registration for the virtual informational meeting is required. Please pre-register using the following link:
<https://zoom.us/join>

When prompted, please enter 871 5710 8884 to register.

Join us to meet the Service's Red Wolf Team and to learn more about:

- Red wolf status
- The Service's Coyote Sterilization Program after the meeting
- How to get involved in red wolf recovery

Already have questions? We invite you to submit those ahead of time when you register. There will also be an opportunity to submit questions during the meeting.



Above left: captive-born red wolf pup being transferred to the wild, credit USFWS; above: red wolf on Alligator River NWR, credit USFWS.

After registration, participants will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting. On the day of the meeting, please join using the information contained in your confirmation email.

For more information:
Jennifer M. Koehes
Supervisory Public Affairs Specialist
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Mobile: 843/670 7902
jennifer_koehes@fws.gov





Eastern North Carolina Red Wolf Population Management Update



- Winter/Spring 2021 - 2022 planned release of 9 captive red wolves
- Family group of 5 on central PLNWR
- 2 pairs on Alligator River NWR

Photo courtesy of Christy Frank – Running Wild Media



Eastern North Carolina Red Wolf Population Management Update

Winter – Constructed acclimation pens on ARNWR and PLNWR





Eastern North Carolina Red Wolf Population Management Update

- Early February – Captured a wild female red wolf on private land with landowner permission.
- Opportunity to try and pair her with a captive male
- Coordinated with WRC and SSP/SAFE management team
- Brought total number to be released to 10



Photo: USFWS



Eastern North Carolina Red Wolf Population Management Update

Collared all captive red wolves to be released with orange GPS/VHF collars with orange reflective material.



Photo: USFWS



Eastern North Carolina Red Wolf Population Management Update

- All red wolves will continue to be fitted with bright orange collars
- Red wolves are federally protected under ESA. Reminder that killing or harming them is illegal.
- Look closely for an orange collar. If you see orange, don't shoot!





Eastern North Carolina Red Wolf Population Management Update

Placed mobile electronic highway signs in multiple locations in closest proximity to red wolf releases prior to release and in areas with red wolf use after release.





Eastern North Carolina Red Wolf Population Management Update

- Contacted landowners closest to release sites prior to release
- When red wolves were known to be spending time on private land, we contacted the landowner to notify them of their presence and address any concerns
- Encouraged folks to contact us anytime for questions or concerns





Eastern North Carolina Red Wolf Population Management Update

Red Wolf Hotline
1-855-4-WOLVES
1-855-496-5837



- Responded to all calls, texts or emails with questions, concerns, sightings and potential issues
- Addressed time-sensitive calls 24/7



Eastern North Carolina Red Wolf Population Management Update

Worked with several local, regional and national media outlets this year to get the word out about red wolf recovery in general and the releases





Eastern North Carolina Red Wolf Population Management Update - Releases





Eastern North Carolina Red Wolf Population Management Update

- February 8 – Released red wolf pair on north ARNWR
- March 15 – Released red wolf pair on south ARNWR
- March 31 – Released the family group of 5 red wolves on central PLNWR



Photo: USFWS



Eastern North Carolina Red Wolf Population Management Update

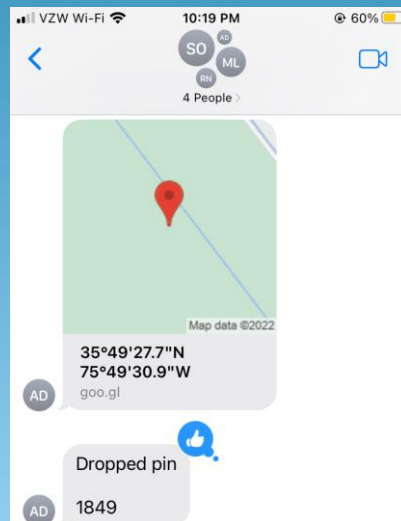


- April 4 – Released the wild female red wolf and captive born male red wolf within her territory on east PLNWR
- June 6 – re-released male originally released on north ARNWR on south ARNWR



Eastern North Carolina Red Wolf Population Management Update

- Tracked and monitored every newly released red wolf daily
- Provided supplemental food when feasible to help transition to the wild





Eastern North Carolina Red Wolf Population Management Update



Photo: USFWS

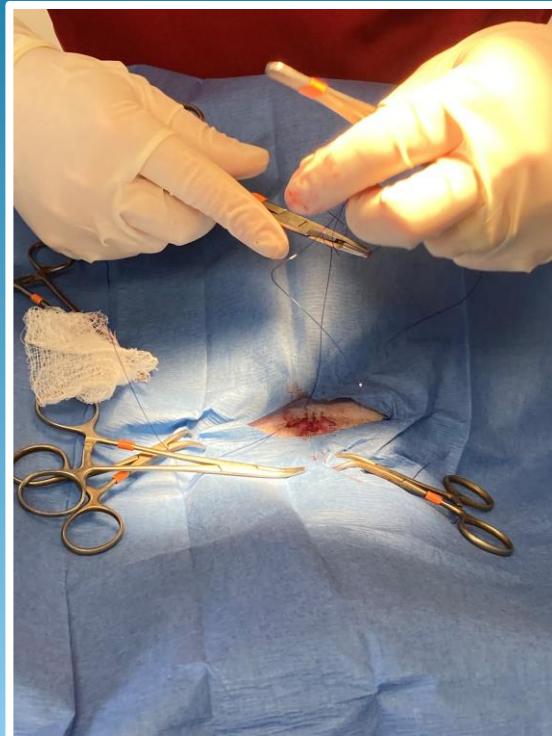
- Track/monitor all wild red wolf multiple times a week, not just the new releases.
- Routinely monitor with remote sensing cameras.
- Conduct trapping from November through March



Eastern North Carolina Red Wolf Population Management Update

December 2021 through early April 2022, captured 20 wild canids and 4 more were transferred to FWS from private trappers for genetic testing.

Sterilized, collared and released 12 additional coyotes under WRC permit. 24 sterilized coyotes currently being tracked within ENC RWP.





Eastern North Carolina Red Wolf Population

Coyote Sterilization



- Developed in the late 1990's/early 2000's by a group of scientists as part of an adaptive management strategy
- Canid population differs in areas with or without red wolves
- If a coyote is removed from the landscape, it is quickly replaced by one or more coyotes
- If a coyote is captured and sterilized, they continue to hold/defend their territory but can't breed



Eastern North Carolina Red Wolf Population

Coyote Sterilization

- Done at no cost to landowners
- All sterilized coyotes are radio collared and released back where they were captured.
- Reduces hybridization and the coyote population locally
- Can benefit landowners and their land management goals
- Benefits red wolf recovery





Eastern North Carolina Red Wolf Population Management - Release Update/Challenges



Photo courtesy of John Stroud



Eastern North Carolina Red Wolf Population Management Update - Challenges

- Bonded pairs did not remain together
- Some released red wolves too complacent around developed areas
- Some released red wolves that were transitioning well to the wild were still mortalities, including human-caused and natural





Eastern North Carolina Red Wolf Population Management Update



Photo: USFWS

- Three red wolves were returned to the captive population based on their complacency around developed areas and humans leading to concerns regarding their ability to survive in the wild
- April 11 – Sub-adult male released on central PLNWR was recaptured
- May 10 – Breeding male released on central PLNWR was recaptured
- June 22 – Male re-released on south ARNWR was recaptured



Eastern North Carolina Red Wolf Population Management Update

- March 11 – Received morality notification for female released on north ARNWR
- April 20 – Yearling male released from central PLNWR reported by landowner as gunshot mortality





Eastern North Carolina Red Wolf Population Management Update

- April 15 – Found male released on east PLNWR in mortality mode during daily tracking
- Cause of death – gunshot to spine leading to suffocation
- \$25,000 reward for info leading to prosecution
- Contact Refuge Law Enforcement Patrol Captain Frank Simms at 252-216-7504 or Special Agent Jason Keith at 919-856-4786 ext. 34



Photo: USFWS



Eastern North Carolina Red Wolf Population Management Update

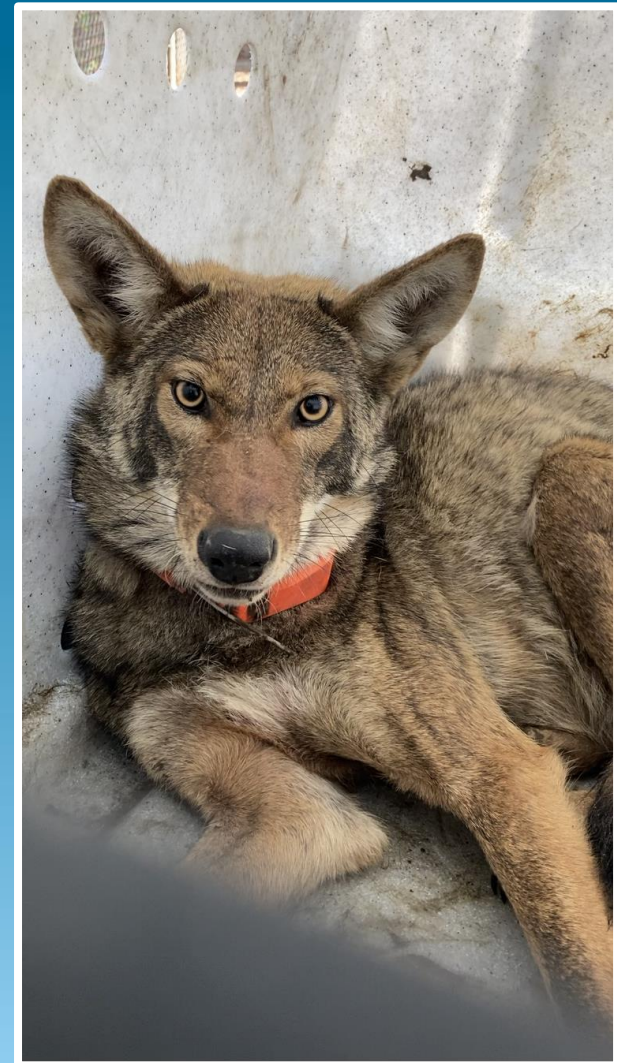


- April 3 – Last time a signal was received for the female released on south ARNWR
- Extensive ground tracking/searches and aerial telemetry searches
- Fate is currently unknown



Eastern North Carolina Red Wolf Population Management Update

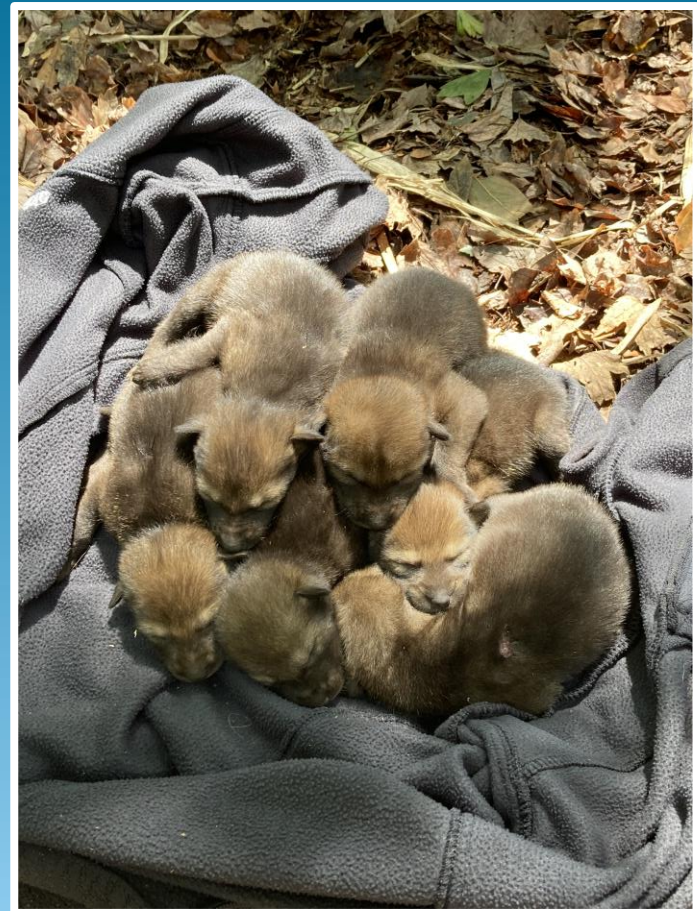
During capture operations, caught 2 of the pups
fostered into a wild den in May 2021





Eastern North Carolina Red Wolf Population Management Update

April 19 - Confirmed a wild red wolf litter of 6 pups (4F, 2M) on ARNWR. First wild red wolf litter born in ENC RWP since 2018





Eastern North Carolina Red Wolf Population Management Update



Cheek swab for genetic analysis



General physical exam



Microchipping



Eastern North Carolina Red Wolf Population Management Update





Eastern North Carolina Red Wolf Population Management Update

Fall/Winter/Spring 2022-2023 Management Actions

- Looked closely at research and management actions over the life of the program regarding releases that had the highest likelihood of success
- Incorporated lessons learned over the past 2 years
- Result is the Phase III Release Plan
- Focus on pup fostering opportunities whenever possible





Eastern North Carolina Red Wolf Population Management Update

Fall/Winter/Spring 2022-2023 Management Actions

- Increase number of breeding pairs in the ENC RWP
 - Translocate wild female red wolf from SVNWR to ENC RWP
 - Attempt to pair captive born red wolves with unpaired wild red wolves within their territory
- Red wolves selected for release have been individually evaluated and selected to increase likelihood of a successful release into the wild



Photo courtesy of Wood Sandy



St. Vincent National Wildlife Refuge Red Wolf Island Propagation Site



- Established as a propagation site off of the Gulf Coast of Florida in 1990 to maintain a pair of breeding red wolves in a somewhat controlled environment, so offspring are raised in the wild
- When young reach dispersal age they are captured and translocated to the ENC RWP.



St. Vincent National Wildlife Refuge

Red Wolf Island Propagation Site



- Fall 2021 – male red wolf transferred from Wolf Conservation Center to an acclimation pen on St. Vincent NWR
- Winter 2022 - released male onto the island
- Quickly paired with one of the resident wild female red wolves. Remote camera footage indicated mating
- No confirmation of red wolf pups to date
- Younger adult female on island has eluded capture



Eastern North Carolina Red Wolf Population Management Update

Red Wolf Coalition (RWC) Depredation Compensation Program

- Administered and funded by RWC
- Reimburses landowners for loss of livestock by red wolves
- Depredations by red wolves are very rare
- Valuable assurance to landowners, with hopes to increase tolerance and/or support
- Contact USFWS within 24 hours if suspected red wolf depredation





Eastern North Carolina Red Wolf Population

How Can I Help and/or Get Involved?

- Contact the USFWS Red Wolf Team directly if you have any questions, concerns or issues related to red wolves
- We are available to work with you to address your concerns



Photo courtesy of Jessica Suarez



Eastern North Carolina Red Wolf Population

How Can I Help and/or Get Involved?

- Don't shoot collared canids
 - Illegal to shoot red wolves (orange collars)
 - To your benefit not to shoot sterilized coyotes (white or black collars)
- Drive with caution in areas with red wolves
- Engage in recovery efforts (e.g., public meetings, providing comments on recovery plans, etc.)





Eastern North Carolina Red Wolf Population

How Can I Help and/or Get Involved?

Red Wolf Center - Columbia, NC

- Partnership with North Carolina Wildlife Federation and National Wildlife Refuge Association

- Red wolves in a public viewing pen, onsite programs and webcams

- Continuing to expand outreach and education efforts with partners

- Volunteer opportunities – Contact Katerina Ramos at katerina@ncwf.org or 252-216-6634

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
Pocosin Lakes
National Wildlife Refuge | North Carolina
205 S. Ludington Drive
Columbia, NC 27925
(252) 796-3004
www.fws.gov/refuge/pocosin_lakes
A UNIT OF THE
National Wildlife
Refuge System

Pocosin Lakes National Wildlife Refuge Visitor Centers

Red Wolf Center

Call to Schedule

Interested in learning more about red wolves? Join us at

"Red Wolves 101"

Learn the history and biology of the American red wolf!

Program held at the Red Wolf Center located one mile south of Columbia on Highway 94

Walter B. Jones Center for the Sounds

Open Hours:
Thurs. – Sun.
10 am to 3 pm

Stretch your legs and learn!

Boardwalk Nature Walk

Self-guided 30-minute, ¼ mile nature walk

Follow the black bear prints along the breezeway to the Center for the Sounds

Questions? Please call 252-796-3004 ext. 222 or email at katerina@ncwf.org

Like us on Facebook (@pocosinlakes)

Programs provided in partnership with the North Carolina Wildlife Federation. Visit www.ncwf.org for more information.

The US Fish and Wildlife Service is committed to providing access for all participants. Persons needing reasonable accommodations in order to attend and participate should contact 252-796-3004. Please contact us at least 2 weeks prior to the event.



Eastern North Carolina Red Wolf Population

How Can I Help and/or Get Involved?

1
Select Habitat to Improve

2
Develop a Habitat Project with Staff

3
Sign Project Agreement

4
Implement & Complete the Project

5
Submit Receipts for Cost-share

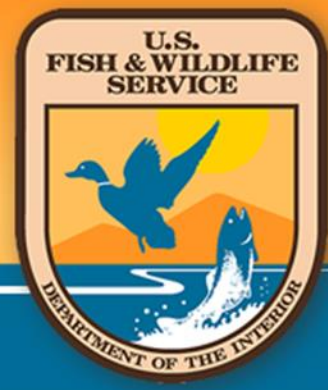
6
Reap The Benefits

Interested?
Luke_Lolies@fws.gov
- or -
(252) 256-3676

Prey For The Pack
A Habitat Improvement Program

- Become a Prey for the Pack Participant
- USFWS provides funding and technical assistance to landowners for habitat work to meet their land management goals
- Landowners agree to:
 - Allow red wolves to be present
 - Allow monitoring
 - And up to their comfort level allow for coyote sterilization



Eastern North Carolina Red Wolf Population Community Engagement

The USFWS Red Wolf Team is committed and available to work with you to address your questions and concerns regarding red wolves.

Who Should I Contact Regarding Red Wolves in Eastern NC?

- Red Wolf Hotline 1-855-4-WOLVES (1-855-496-5837) or redwolf@fws.gov
- Emily Weller, Red Wolf Recovery Program Coordinator at (337) 291-3090 or emily_weller@fws.gov
- Joe Madison, NC Program Manager/Wildlife Biologist at (252) 475-8259 or joseph_madison@fws.gov
- Luke Lories, Private Lands Biologist and Prey for the Pack at (252) 256-3676 or luke_lories@fws.gov



Eastern North Carolina Red Wolf Population Community Engagement

Submit questions regarding this evening's presentation to:

- redwolf@fws.gov

Answers will be provided via:

- Direct email response and/or posted on the Red Wolf Recovery Program website



Visit our website for more information and updates:

<https://fws.gov/project/red-wolf-recovery-program>



Questions?



Photo courtesy of Nancy Archart



Eastern North Carolina Red Wolf Population Community Engagement

Thank You for Attending!

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