

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

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Eastern North Carolina Red Wolf Population

Red Wolf Recovery Program

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Update on the Eastern North Carolina Red Wolf Population (ENC RWP)

- Population

- The current known population of wild red wolves (e.g., radio-collared individuals) in the ENC RWP is 12, with the estimated total population of approximately 15-17 red wolves. All collared red wolves have orange collars.
- All collared red wolves are within their areas of expected use.
- The 5 red wolf pups born last spring on Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge are now yearlings and have all been radio collared. The breeding female appears to have denned again this year.
- There have been 3 mortalities of wild red wolves since the last PCC. One of natural causes, one pending necropsy results and one unknown that will remain as an unknown cause of death due to its condition when located. All were older red wolves.

- Management

- Ground telemetry conducted several days a week to get locations for all collared red wolves and sterilized coyotes. There are 26 sterilized coyotes with active radio collars.
- Over 40 remote sensing cameras deployed and monitored on a weekly basis throughout the ENC RWP on refuges and private land with landowner permission.
- We are continuing the implementation of the Phase III release plan. Includes:
 - Increasing the number of breeding pairs in the wild, particularly by pairing a captive born red wolf with a wild red wolf. We currently have 3 female wild red wolves in acclimation pens with captive born males, two on Pocosin Lakes NWR and one on Alligator River NWR. The 2 on Pocosin Lakes NWR are the pups that were foster from the Akron Zoo in 2021.
 - Pup fostering whenever possible. We are currently in the middle of determining if pups fostering will be possible this year.

- Translocating a wild female red wolf from St. Vincent NWR to the ENC RWP. The female was captured in November, and she in an acclimation pen with a captive born male on Alligator River NWR.
 - There is a captive born family group of 3 in an acclimation pen on Pocosin Lakes NWR
 - In total, not counting any pup fostering, 6 captive born red wolves and 1 translocated wild red wolf will be released in May, along with any litters born in acclimation pens.
- Capture operations within the ENC RWP concluded at the end of March.
- Road closures on Alligator River NWR implemented in December due to the high degree of public near the red wolves throughout the day were lifted at the end of February. However, due to the location of this year's den, a portion of those roads were re-closed last week and will remain closed through August to significantly reduce the possibilities of habituation issues such that occurred last year. The public is continuing to get good looks at the red wolves out in the fields but at a distance that is far less likely to cause issues.
- Met with the Dare County Public Works Director and Defenders of Wildlife to discuss wildlife issues related to the County Landfill/Transfer station located adjacent to Alligator River NWR and ways to reduce those issues. A way forward has been developed with the installation of an effective fence system planned.
- Meet with WRC multiple times a month on a set schedule, and as needed, to coordinate canid management within the ENC RWP.
- Just hired a biological technician to work with the Red Wolf Recovery Program. The individual will be a contracted bio tech through the Coastal Wildlife Refuge Society with grant funding secured by the Red Wolf Coalition. We are looking forward to this additional staff member and appreciate the efforts to obtain the funds.

Outreach

- We are continuing to contact private landowners where we know red wolves are spending time based on tracking/monitoring to make them aware of the presence of red wolves on their property and to address any potential concerns or issues.
- Red Wolf Recovery Program staff are promptly responded to all calls, texts or emails received from landowners and members of the public regarding their questions, concerns, sightings and potential issues, including addressing time sensitive calls 24/7. As is typical, call volume this time of year has increased.
- Continuing to work towards finalizing multiple Prey for the Pack and other agreements geared toward providing access, monitoring and tolerance of red wolves on private lands. Some of the

parcels being discussed are in key spots from a red wolf standpoint and are with large landowners that had previously revoked access about a decade ago.

- Worked collaboratively with the NC Museum of Natural Sciences, with additional funding support by NCWF, to establish the Red Wolf Teacher Ambassador program. The program will select area teachers to work with the Red Wolf Recovery Program to provide ad hoc outreach to the public in areas where the red wolves are present, assist with red wolf monitoring efforts and run the Red Wolf Center some days of the week. Two individuals were selected for this pilot year of the program. They're both high school science teachers, one in Tyrrell County and one in Beaufort County.
- An in-person meeting will be held Tuesday, May 9, 2023, from 6:00 – 8:30 p.m., at Mattamuskeet High School, 20392 US-264, Swanquarter, North Carolina. A virtual public meeting will be held on Wednesday, May 10, 2023, from 6:00 – 8:00 p.m. EST. Information on how to attend and participate in the virtual public meeting is on the Service's website at redwolfcountry.com
- After many months of planning and collaboration, the mural at the Red Wolf Center is completed. The idea was over 3 years in the making but without the efforts of Matt Willey, Weiler Woods for Wildlife, Kat Ramos from NCWF, Refuges and countless volunteers it would not have been possible. The outcome is incredible.

