

## **GENERAL UPDATES**

### Red Wolf Recovery Program

The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Red Wolf Species Survival Plan, Arkansas State University's Arkansas Center for Biodiversity Collections, and the Service is in its final stages of review. We anticipate it to be signed soon! The MOU advances red wolf recovery efforts through captive propagation and management, establishes a central location in which red wolf remains will be properly preserved and cataloged for future scientific study and education, and sets forth the processes for authorizing use of red wolf specimens for research and educational purposes. This MOU is intended to enhance collaboration between the organizations in implementing red wolf recovery actions as well as to memorialize each organizations respective commitments and responsibilities.

The Service is working with the Conservation Planning Specialist Group on the process that will be taken to update the recovery plan for the red wolf, including developing the Recovery Team. We are currently bringing on a few team members that will be part of organizing the recovery plan update process and developing the rest of the Recovery Team.

## **WILD POPULATION**

### Update on the North Carolina Nonessential Experimental Population (NC NEP)

- The current known population of red wolves (e.g. radio-collared individuals) in the NC NEP is 8 red wolves with the estimated total population approximately 17 - 20 red wolves. That doesn't include the two males translocated from St. Vincent NWR in December (See below).
- There have been no known red wolf mortalities since our last call in October. There were 2 mortalities in 2020, both as a result of gunshot.

### Tracking

- Tracking continues to be limited from the air due to COVID-19 safety measures. Monitoring flights will resume as soon as it is feasible to do so.
- Ground telemetry occurs multiple days a week throughout the NEP. We have been successful at locating all radio-collared red wolves each week and all have remained within their respective territories.

### Management

- We are continuing to work with the NC Wildlife Resources Commission (WRC) through the Albemarle Peninsula Collaborative Canid Conservation (AP3C) team on general canid management on the AP, including a virtual meeting in November to discuss the translocation plans for this winter. The WRC permit that covers our coyote work for this year includes not only the sterilization of any captured coyotes on Federal lands, but also on private land with landowner permission.

- We began capture operations at St. Vincent National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) and Alligator River NWR at the beginning of November and, except for a brief break over Thanksgiving, we have continued trapping every day since. We also began trapping on Pocosin Lakes NWR last week.
  - St. Vincent NWR: To date, we have captured the two male red wolves and the breeding female.
    - The two male red wolves were translocated from St. Vincent NWR to Alligator River NWR in December. They are currently in two different acclimation pens on the refuge. It's important to note that one of the males is the male that was transferred from the NC Zoo to St. Vincent NWR last winter, so after a year in the wild there, he will be released into the NC NEP. Both of the males translocated from St. Vincent NWR have been fitted with orange GPS collars.
    - The breeding female captured at St. Vincent NWR is currently in an acclimation pen there. A male red wolf was transferred from the NC Zoo to St. Vincent at the beginning of December and is currently in the acclimation pen with the breeding female.
    - We are still attempting to capture the now almost three year old female red wolf at St. Vincent in hopes of translocating her to Alligator River NWR.
  - Alligator River NWR: To date, we have captured two female red wolves.
    - One is the previous Milltail Pack breeding female that is now just shy of 11 years old
    - The other is a female that was born into the Milltail Pack many years ago who has spent the majority of her adult life on the bombing range located in the middle of the refuge. She is just shy of 12 years old. We had lost track of her when the battery on her radio collar died over a year ago after functioning for over 7 years.
    - These females are in the two acclimation pens on the refuge, one with each of the males translocated from St. Vincent. Although it is not the red wolf pairs we set out to create, these older females, that are likely past their breeding years, provide a connection to the territories in which the pairs will be released. A red wolf from this area will hopefully help them be successful once released and may make it more likely the pairs will remain on the refuge.
    - We are continuing to attempt to capture the female red wolves intended to be part of the pairs, including the female red wolf in the Milltail area that is almost four years old.
  - We have captured three coyotes on Alligator River NWR, including two uncollared, young male coyotes. One of them was sterilized last week and the other is scheduled to be sterilized next week, before both are released back onto the refuge. The cost of the sterilization for these coyotes was covered by the Red Wolf Coalition, which is greatly appreciated.

## Outreach

- Prey of the Pack (P4P)
  - After a slower rollout than anticipated due to COVID-19 restrictions affecting our ability to meet with landowners, just this week we completed the agreement for

the first participant in P4P. We hope this will be the first of many. We are currently speaking with several other landowners about participation in the program. Thanks to our partner, the North Carolina Wildlife Federation (NCWF), for their participation in this program.

- Web cameras
  - We are continuing to work with NCWF and Pocosin Lakes NWR on placing web cameras showing the enclosure and the den at the Red Wolf Center. NCWF is providing the majority of the funding and installation work. The live feed will be on their website and linked to from the Red Wolf Center webpage as well.
- Media
  - The Red Wolf Recovery Program has participated in several media pieces since the last call including The Guardian, the Washington Post, the BBC, PBS and others.