

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

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Red Wolf Recovery Program

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Update on the North Carolina Nonessential Experimental Population (NEP)

January 21, 2021

- 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. More on that 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
 - o 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.
 - o Ground telemetry occurs multiple days a week throughout the NEP and we are able to locate all collared red wolves every week and all of them have remained within their respective territories.
- Management
 - o We are continuing to work with the NC Wildlife Resources Commission 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.
 - o We began capture operations at Alligator River NWR and St. Vincent NWR at the beginning of November and except for a brief break over Thanksgiving we have continued trapping every day since, including beginning trapping on Pocosin Lakes NWR last week.
 - In 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 Florida to Alligator River NWR in December and 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 Florida 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.

- In Alligator River NWR, to date we have captured two red wolves, the previous Milltail Pack breeding female that is now just shy of 11 years old and a female that was born into the Milltail Pack many years ago who 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, 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. In the meantime, these older females that are likely past their breeding years provide a connection to the territories in which they will be released and a red wolf from this area to hopefully help them be successful once released and may make it more likely they will remain on the refuge.
- In addition, 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 for the Pack (P4P)
 - After a slower rollout than anticipated due to COVID-19 restrictions, particularly with meeting with landowners, just this week we completed the agreement for the first participant in Prey for the Pack, which we hope will be the first of many. We are currently having conversations with several other landowners. Thanks to our partner, the North Carolina Wildlife Federation, for their participation in this program.
 - We are continuing to work with North Carolina Wildlife Federation 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.