



## Productive Puppy Season, Successful Fostering at Alligator River NWR

*Every spring, field biologists* with the Red Wolf Recovery Program listen for the squeaky whine of young red wolf pups as they search beneath logs, in the pocosin thickets, and in brush pile-burrows for red wolf dens. When they locate dens, each pup is counted, tagged, sampled for blood, and carefully placed back in its den. This annual census occurs during “puppy season,” early-April through late May. This spring, red wolf biologists had a record-breaking puppy season, as the team located 11 dens with 55 pups and added two more puppies to the count via fostering.

Captive-to-wild fostering events are coordinated efforts by the USFWS Red Wolf Recovery Program and the American Zoo & Aquarium Association’s Red Wolf Species Survival Plan (RWSSP). Fostering is a new method which allows genetically valuable captive-born red wolf pups to become integrated into the wild red wolf population. The pups develop in the wild, so that they gain survival skills required to mature and reproduce. “This technique is effective,” explains Art Beyer, Field Coordinator for the Red Wolf Recovery Program, “when the fostered pups live long enough to contribute their genes to the wild population by producing pups of their own.”

This spring, in addition to the two new 2004 arrivals, the USFWS Red Wolf Recovery Program was able to measure the success of a previous 2002 fostering attempt. It was this time two years ago when a bold experiment placed two pups from the North Carolina Zoological Park into a wild den containing two pups of identical age. The male and female pups were successfully adopted by their wild foster mother and raised within the pack. During the following spring of 2003, the two captive-born yearlings remained with their adopted pack and helped raise a new litter of pups. This spring, biologists were hopeful that each of the zoo-born red wolves would produce litters of their own.

The male zoo-born wolf, displaced from his adopted pack and forced to establish a range of his own, was successful in securing the alpha position of another established pack, just in time for breeding season. Biologists are celebrating the discovery of a litter of eight puppies that was fathered by the zoo-born male. This rather large litter denotes success for the 2002 fostering attempt. “This event demonstrates that the captive breeding program and the free-ranging population are integral aspects of the Red Wolf Recovery Program. They still depend greatly on each other for the recovery of the species,” explains Will Waddell, Coordinator of the RWSSP Captive Breeding Program.

In mid-April, a telemetry intern detected a mortality signal from the zoo-born female’s radio tracking collar. A mortality signal is produced when a red wolf does not move for six hours. When the female’s body was recovered, all symptoms pointed to complications with pregnancy. “We are saddened at the loss of this zoo-born female and her unborn pups, but are encouraged by her ability to adapt successfully to the wild before dying of natural causes,” comments Buddy Fazio, Team Leader of the Red Wolf Recovery Program.

**Biologists Pair Red Wolves to Form Packs**

*Red wolves are extremely social animals* that rely on their family groups for survival. The bond between the two breeding wolves of each family group is vital if a pack wants to establish and maintain a territory. However, there comes a time when nearly every red wolf must fend for itself, whether it is a young wolf dispersing from its natal pack or a red wolf that has lost its pack mates.

The lone red wolf is vulnerable to the encroachment of neighboring packs as well as the threat of pairing with a non-wolf mate. A red wolf who cannot locate a suitable red wolf mate may sometimes pair with a coyote or hybrid. If the two animals breed, they can create a litter of hybrid pups who threaten the integrity of the red wolf species. If the non-wolf mate has previously been identified, surgically sterilized and given a radio collar by Recovery Program biologists, there is hope that the red wolf in question may be introduced to a more appropriate mate.

Although the majority of red wolves find locate suitable mates on their own, the Red Wolf Recovery Program’s Adaptive Management Plan to control hybridization calls for the field crew to occasionally create red wolf pairs in areas where non-wolves may infringe on the population. In essence, red wolf biologists sometimes act like match-makers for red wolves, usually lone wolves who occupy the western most territories of the recovery area, as these are most at risk for pairing with a non-wolf.

During the last breeding season, red wolf biologists attempted four pairings, three of which resulted in successful pair bonds. One “love story” involves a three year-old female, 11163F, who was occupying a territory in an isolated area that was not a natural travel corridor for red wolves. Fieldwork suggested that she did not have a mate and there were concerns that a non-wolf might attempt to fill the void. Luckily, biologists picked up two year-old 11188M, who had dispersed from his natal pack and was traveling an area that was already crowded with established wolf packs. It was the ideal opportunity to take a wandering lone male and introduce him to a female who had established territory in an area devoid of other known wolves. 11188M was caught and then immediately released near 11163F, a technique known as a “hard release.” The two wolves soon found each other and telemetry observations indicate that they have bonded and are maintaining a territory.

Of course, the process is not always so simple. Sometimes matchmakers must work a little harder to make a “love connection.” Oftentimes, a potential pair will be held during breeding season for six to eight weeks in captivity and then released together. Each match-making attempt is slightly different, depending on the circumstances of the mates-to-be. Biologists can never force wolves to pair, but it is a technique that is worth the effort. “Creating pairs is a unique opportunity to boost red wolf productivity while managing the threat of hybridization,” explains Recovery Program biologist Michael Morse. Although red wolves have their share of ill-fated romance, those pairs that do bond and breed will help the rest of the red wolf species live “happily ever after.”

**U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service: Quarterly Report April 1–June 30**

Radio-collared wolves .....63  
 Radio-collared hybrids/coyotes ..... 14  
 Captive red wolves ..... 154  
 Captive wolves on islands .....2  
 Confirmed births.....55  
 Deaths .....5  
 Wolf packs known/suspected .....21

*For a complete copy of the USFWS Quarterly Report, please see the Red Wolf Coalition’s website at <http://www.redwolves.com>*

<p><b>Walker Foundation Funds Red Wolf Ecotourism Study</b></p>	<p><i>The ecological importance of the red wolf</i> cannot be disputed, but the value of these charismatic canines may extend well beyond the biological realm. Thanks to a grant from the Walker Foundation, Defenders of Wildlife is currently investigating the potential benefits of the red wolf as an economic resource. Complete recovery of the species will not occur until we can eliminate negative public perceptions and dispel the myths surrounding the wolf. By promoting wolves with a market-based incentive approach, we hope to generate a wave of public enthusiasm for red wolf conservation.</p> <p>Defenders has contracted Dr. Gale Lash to examine public awareness and attitudes towards red wolves, local interest in and capability for ecotourism, and tourist desire for activities based on red wolves and other wildlife. Through surveys and one-on-one interviews, Dr. Lash will assess the possibilities for sustainable ecotourism development in northeastern North Carolina. Dr. Lash will present the results of her work and discuss the potential for ecotourism in the region in a public forum on August 12 at 7:30 PM in Columbia, NC.</p>
<p><b>Coalition Benefit Concert: <i>Some Enchanted Evening!</i></b></p>	<p><i>Get ready to circle a date</i> (to be announced) on your calendars for the spring of 2005! The Red Wolf Coalition Benefit on June 18th in Washington, DC was such a success that a repeat performance is already in the works for next year. The spotlight was on the virtuosity of Helene Grimaud, world-renowned pianist, who played for an audience of approximately 90 people. Standing ovations called for encores, and Helene graciously treated the audience to more glorious music.</p> <p>The setting enhanced the music, the reception and the silent auction. Located on Dupont Circle in Washington, DC, the National Trust for Historic Preservation is one of the city's most beautiful buildings. The reception was held in the big foyer and the adjacent room. The boardroom with its chandeliers, fireplace and grand piano added more than just a dash of romance to the evening. One couple remarked that they felt as though they had been transported to an 18th Century recital in an elegant drawing room. Exactly!</p> <p>Good food, excellent wine and punch and a silent auction with items ranging from eastern North Carolina vacation packages to a Russian Easter egg added a festive mood to the concert. Guests came from Maine, Maryland, Tennessee, New York and Minnesota, and Red Wolf Coalition board members and Red Wolf Recovery Team biologists and the USFWS Outreach and Education Coordinator drove to Washington from North Carolina.</p> <p>The Coalition made about \$13,000 on this event. In addition to the money, the red wolf and the efforts of the Recovery Team and the Coalition to ensure the future of this endangered animal were showcased. The list of people and organizations making this possible is long. The Red Wolf Coalition extends heartfelt gratitude to all of them, and to Helene Grimaud for donating her time and her genius to make this event possible. She is a great artist with a huge talent and an even bigger heart.</p> <p><i>See the following page for a complete listing of this event's patrons, sponsors, donors, and supporting organizations.</i></p>

*The Red Wolf Coalition wishes to thank everyone who helped make this year's benefit concert a success!*

**Event Patrons**

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The International Wolf Center  
The National Trust for Historic Preservation  
The North Carolina Zoo  
The Red Wolf Coalition

The United States Fish and Wildlife Service  
The Washington Performing Arts Society  
The Wilderness Society  
The Wolf Conservation Center

**Thanks also too...**

*The Outer Banks Brew Station* of Kill Devil Hills, North Carolina. The Brew Station recently made a gift to the Coalition of \$1500 as part of its Martini Games event.

**Red Wolf  
Recovery Teacher  
Workshop**

*Does playing games and tracking red wolves* sound like fun to you? Well, it was all in a day's work for the sixteen educators from across North Carolina who attended the first-ever Red Wolf Recovery Teacher Workshop at Pocosin Lakes National Wildlife Refuge on May 25<sup>th</sup>. The one-day workshop attracted teachers and park rangers who were hoping to learn more about the recovery of one of America's most endangered mammals and, in the meantime, enhance their curricula and repertoire of environmental education activities. Participants were especially excited about the opportunity to scout for signs of red wolves in the wild and pour plaster casts of their tracks.

The workshop, which can be counted toward the North Carolina Environmental Education Certificate and qualifies as a Continuing Education Unit for school teachers, will be held periodically each year. In exchange for the free workshop, each participant must commit to teach at least one lesson based on the red wolf curriculum. "The workshops are mutually beneficial," explains Sarah Krueger, Outreach Coordinator of the Red Wolf Recovery Program, "teachers and red wolves, alike, profit from the experience."

**Wildlife Kids  
Support Red Wolf  
Conservation**

*Wildlife Kids* (WLK) has raised more than \$200 selling lemonade and through recycling to support the protection of the Red Wolf. They are passionate about animals, particularly those most vulnerable. They are also researching the situation of the Iberian Lynx, which is also one of our planet's most endangered animals.



*Wildlife Kids*

WLK member Rebecca notes that "*Endangered* means that there is still time, but time alone is not enough. We have to take action to rescue them. That is why we have been collecting bottles and cans so we can recycle them and use the money to help the endangered animals."

**Visit Us Online!**

*Want to learn more* about the Red Wolf Coalition? Be sure to visit us on the web at:

<http://www.redwolves.com>

## Yes! I want to contribute to red wolf conservation!

*If you would like to become a member of the Red Wolf Coalition, please complete the membership form below and return it with a check, money order, or your credit card information. Thanks for becoming an important part of red wolf recovery!*

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- Patron Donor: \$1000
- Alpha Wolf: \$100
- Pack Member: \$50
- Supporter: \$25
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