



Questions and Answers Red Wolf Evaluation Release

Q: How is the Service going to use the evaluation findings?

A: The evaluation completed by the Wildlife Management Institute is currently being used to inform a broader internal agency evaluation regarding the future of the non-essential experimental population in Eastern North Carolina. Program evaluations are a normal practice with any recovery program to ensure optimal effectiveness. It is part of an internal review process now underway. We will be consulting with key agency personnel as well as the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission throughout the process, however, the final decision will be made by the Service's Southeast Regional Director.

Q: What type of information did the Fish and Wildlife Service provide Wildlife Management Institute for the program review?

A: We provided numerous documents including Federal Register notices, national wildlife refuge Environmental Assessments, red wolf recovery plans, red wolf mortality tables, budgets, landowner agreements, and other agency documents. These are listed in Appendix D of the evaluation and are available for download on our website at <http://www.fws.gov/redwolf/evaluation.html>.

Q: The Service reported some discrepancies in the number of comments received during the public comment period, specifically, comments received via email. Why did this happen and how has it been handled?

A: The Service relies on Gmail for its email services. To gather comments from the public, the Service established a specific email address. When emails started to come in large numbers with the same text and title automatic Google filters treated them like automated spam attacks and blocked them from the Service's Red Wolf email account presuming the network was being hacked. After becoming aware of this, the Service posted a press release extending the comment period for another two weeks.

Q: Once the Service announces its decision, will the public have an opportunity to comment?

A: No. Once a decision is reached regarding the future of the non-essential experimental population, it will not be subject to public comment.

Q: If the project in Eastern North Carolina ends, is that the end for the red wolf recovery in the wild?

A: No, our goal and task to recover the species remains the same. So long as the red wolf is listed as an endangered species the Service will continue to work towards the recovery goal in the Red Wolf Recovery Plan that calls for three self-sustaining wild populations distributed through the historic range of the species.

Q: What is the difference between the overall Red Wolf Recovery effort and the non-essential, experimental population in Eastern North Carolina?

A: There are currently two red wolf populations: the non-essential experimental population in Eastern North Carolina, consisting of 90-110 wild wolves, and the captive population consisting of approximately 190 wolves. Both of these populations contribute to our agency's efforts to recover the species. The wild population – established under Section 10(j) of the Endangered Species Act – is “non-essential” because, based on the best available science, loss of the non-essential experimental population would not result in extinction of the species.

Q: Why did the Service establish a non-essential experimental population?

A: Designation as a non-essential experimental population allows for reduced regulatory restrictions off of federal lands, which benefits private landowners, and increases management flexibility for the Service as it to reintroduce a species into the wild.

For more general questions and answers on red wolves, please visit our website at <http://www.fws.gov/redwolf/faq.html>