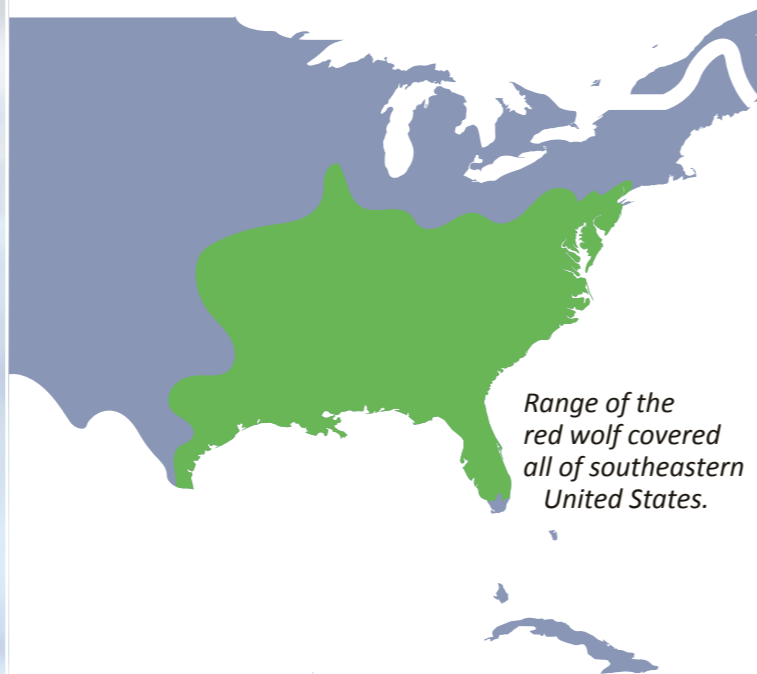


The red wolf (*Canis rufus*), native to the southeastern United States, is the most endangered canid in the world. Named for their tawny coat, this unique species is mostly brown and buff colored with some black along their backs and a reddish color on their ears, head, and legs. Red wolves may also be identified by their pointy ears, broad muzzle, wide head, and long slender legs. Red wolf populations were decimated by predator control programs and loss of habitat over the course of the 19th and 20th century, and are currently classified as critically endangered.

## HISTORIC RANGE MAP



# AMERICAN RED WOLVES

(*Canis rufus*)

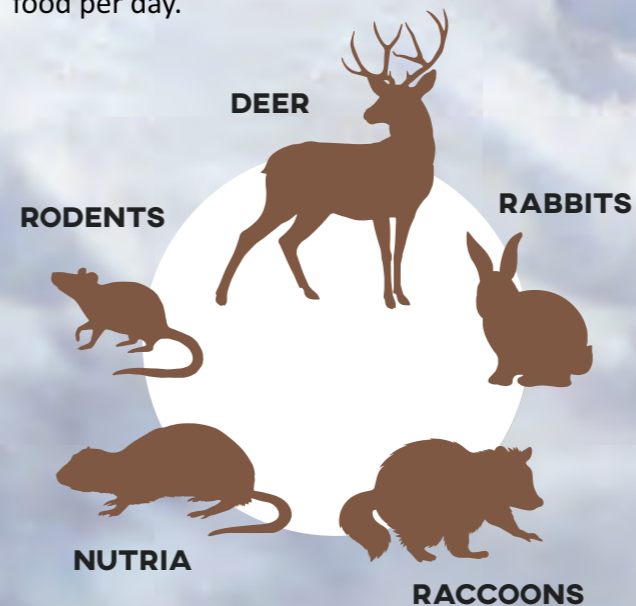
## BIOLOGY

The red wolf can grow up to 26 inches tall, range from 45-80 lbs, and measure about four feet in length from tail tip to nose. They're significantly larger than coyotes, though smaller than their gray wolf cousins.



## ECOLOGY

As carnivorous animals, red wolves can live in a variety of habitats. They help maintain the balance of the ecosystem by removing old and sick animals, and eliminating small predators that prey on ground-nesting birds such as quail and turkey. Their ideal diet consists of white-tailed deer, racoons, and small mammals like rabbits, mice, and nutria. They hunt opportunistically, traveling up to 20 miles a day to find food, and eating 2-5 pounds of food per day.



The red wolf was designated endangered in 1967, and were later declared extinct in the wild in 1980. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) have initiated efforts to conserve and recover the species, and are responsible for monitoring the health and expansion of the red wolf population. They now inhabit a five-county area in northeastern North Carolina including the Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge as a non-essential experimental population (NEP).



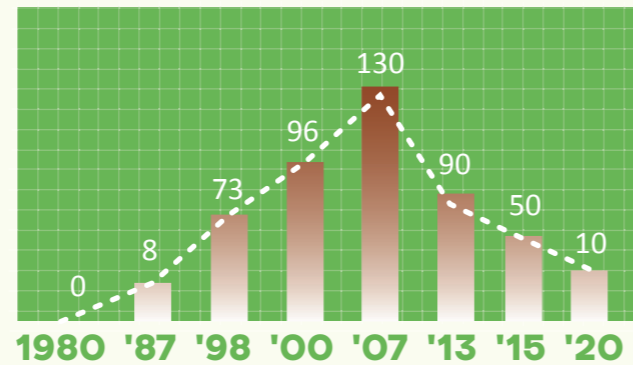
While less than 20 red wolves remain in the wild in the NEP, more than 200 red wolves are maintained in captive breeding facilities throughout the United States. Still, the red wolf remains one of the world's most endangered species.

# SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

- 1967** ○ Red wolf in "Class of '67," placing them among the first species listed under the Endangered Species Preservation Act (now the Endangered Species Act).
- 1980** ○ Red wolf declared extinct in the wild.
- 1987** ○ Red wolves reintroduced in North Carolina.
- 1990** ○ USFWS issues Red Wolf Recovery Program requiring at least 3 reintroduced populations within historic range.
- 2000** ○ Adaptive Management Plan implemented to address red wolf-coyote hybridization.
- 2007** ○ Red Wolf Recovery Program receives AZA North American Conservation Award.
- 2016** ○ USFWS announces plans to significantly change the Recovery Plan, and proposes removing most wild wolves to captivity.
- 2017** ○ U.S. Senate calls for USFWS to end the Red Wolf Recovery Program.
- 2018** ○ The U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of North Carolina makes permanent the 2016 temporary injunction on killing red wolves on private lands.
- 2019** ○ The National Academy of Sciences declares red wolf a distinct species.

# IN THE WILD

## POPULATION TIMELINE



The wild red wolf population saw a promising period of growth in the early 2000s, but human-related deaths have caused a sharp decline in recent years.

# THREATS

- 🐾 The chief threat to the red wolf's path to survival is humans, with gunshot wounds as a leading cause of death. Working with landowners in the recovery range is necessary to change attitudes and achieve a sustainable future for the red wolf.
- 🐾 As the fragmentation and loss of the red wolf habitat has contributed to the decline of the species, this is further complicated by expanding coyote populations.
- 🐾 Coyotes may directly compete with wolves for resources, as well as introduce diseases, though their potential to dilute red wolf genetic lines through hybridization also remains a threat, especially in the event that a pack has lost an adult member of their breeding pair near breeding season.

# HOW YOU CAN HELP!

- 🐾 **LEARN ABOUT RED WOLVES AND TEACH OTHERS.** Understanding the nature of wolves and their value to our ecosystem is crucial for their survival.
- 🐾 **VISIT A PLACE WHERE RED WOLVES LIVE.** Go to a zoo or nature center that houses a red wolf exhibit. See [americanwolf.org/red-wolf](http://americanwolf.org/red-wolf) for a list of locations.
- 🐾 **CONTACT YOUR FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVES** and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to voice your support for red wolf recovery. Ask them for support of wildlife conservation initiatives and programs.
- 🐾 **DONATE TO FACILITIES & ORGANIZATIONS THAT SUPPORT THE RED WOLF SAVING ANIMALS FROM EXTINCTION ("SAFE") PROGRAM.** Millions of dollars are needed to fund capital investments like new wolf enclosures, and emergency expenses for unexpected veterinary procedures and other special projects. The American Wolf Foundation and others are working to fill this need, promote public awareness, and foster coexistence.
- 🐾 **REDUCE YOUR CARBON FOOTPRINT.** Climate change is the most significant challenge facing wildlife today. Do your part by learning more about this topic and taking action.



## LEARN MORE AT:

[fws.gov/redwolf](http://fws.gov/redwolf)  
and  
[americanwolf.org](http://americanwolf.org)

## PHOTO CREDITS:

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Museum of Life and Science

