



Resolution Requesting that the United States Fish and Wildlife Service Declare the Red Wolf (*Canis rufus*) Extinct in the Wild and Terminate the Red Wolf Reintroduction Program in Beaufort, Dare, Hyde, Tyrrell, and Washington Counties, North Carolina

Whereas, the purposes of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) are “to provide a means whereby the ecosystems upon which endangered species and threatened species depend may be conserved [and] to provide a program for the conservation of such endangered species and threatened species”; and

Whereas, these species of fish, wildlife, and plants conserved under the ESA are to be of “esthetic, ecological, educational, historical, recreational, and scientific value to the Nation and its people”; and

Whereas, red wolves (*Canis rufus*) were listed as endangered in 1967 by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) under the Endangered Species Preservation Act of 1966 resulting in initiation of intensive recovery efforts; and

Whereas, red wolves were believed by the USFWS to be extinct in the wild by 1980; and

Whereas, red wolves produced in captivity from 14 founders originating from 400 wild canids captured from 1973 through 1980 were first released onto the Albemarle Peninsula in the Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge (ARNWR) in 1987; and

Whereas, USFWS designated red wolves on federal lands in the ARNWR and Dare County Bombing Range as a non-essential experimental population, expanding that designation to include Pocosin Lakes National Wildlife Refuge in 1995, a cumulative total of 310,000 acres; and

Whereas, the red wolf recovery area, as currently designated, includes Beaufort, Dare, Hyde, Tyrrell, and Washington counties; and

Whereas, a majority of the lands in those counties are held in private ownership; and

Whereas, the red wolf recovery program is predicated upon the USFWS’s stated goal in 1986, 1991, and 1995 rules for establishing a self-sustaining population managed on federal lands, and under 10(j) rules minimizing negative impacts of red wolves on private lands; and

Whereas, since initiation of the restoration project active management of habitats to benefit red wolves on federal lands has been minimal, resulting in predominant use of private lands by wolves to meet to annual life requisites, a scenario inconsistent with stated USFWS goals; and

Whereas, climate change models indicate that much of the current recovery area will ultimately be inundated by sea level rise; and

Whereas, predominate use of private lands by red wolves continues to increasingly impact land-use options for these landowners, a scenario also inconsistent with USFWS goals and rules; and

Whereas, the USFWS has been unable to fulfill its obligations under federal rules to resolve these conflicts; and

Whereas, coyote distribution and density has continued to increase across the recovery area, resulting in increased hybridization and introgression among red wolves and coyotes; and

Whereas, purity of the red wolf genome is questionable and has been debated since initiation of restoration efforts; and

Whereas, increases in coyote populations combined with coyote/red wolf hybridization and introgression has eliminated a taxonomically unique red wolf; and

Whereas, on October 14, 2014, the USFWS released A Comprehensive Review and Evaluation of the Red Wolf (*Canis Rufus*) Recovery Program (Programmatic Review); and

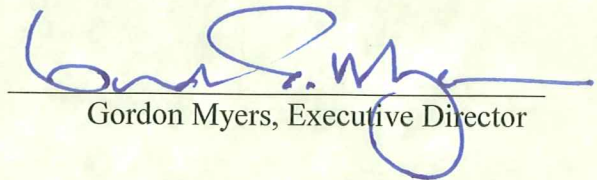
Whereas, the Programmatic Review includes conclusions that the Alligator River, Pocosin, Mattamuskeet, and Swan Quarter National Wildlife Refuges and Dare County Bombing Range within the restoration area cannot be managed or restored in a manner that would provide sufficient habitat for the current population of red wolves.

Now, therefore, be it resolved, that because red wolf restoration is no longer consistent with the goals of the ESA, and because current and future conditions make restoration and management of a self-sustaining population of red wolves on federal lands both taxonomically and operationally impossible, the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission hereby requests that the USFWS:

- declare in federal rules that the red wolf is extinct in the wild in North Carolina,
- terminate the Red Wolf Reintroduction Program for free-ranging red wolves in North Carolina,
- repeal all federal rules describing, delineating, and designating conditions for red wolf restoration in North Carolina,
- designate all wild canids other than foxes on the Albemarle Peninsula as coyotes or coyote-hybrids,
- designate that no federal-trust canids exist on the Albemarle Peninsula, and
- designate that all wild canids on the Albemarle Peninsula are state-trust resources under the jurisdiction of the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission.

Approved, this the 29th day of January, 2015, in an official meeting by the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission.


Jim Cogdell, Chairman


Gordon Myers, Executive Director