

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

February 26, 2021

Mrs. Martha Williams, Principal Deputy Director
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20240

Mr. Leopoldo Miranda, Regional Director Southeast Region
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
1875 Century Boulevard NE, Suite 400
Atlanta, GA 30345

Congressional Letter of Support for Red Wolf Conservation

Dear Deputy Director Williams and Regional Director Miranda:

We, the undersigned members of Congress committed to the preservation and protection of threatened and endangered species, are writing once again to urge the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) to immediately take the steps necessary to prevent the extinction of the world's only wild population of the critically endangered American red wolf. A recent federal court ruling on January 21, 2021 requires FWS to develop a plan by March 1, 2021 to resume the release of captive red wolves into the wild in the federally designated Red Wolf Recovery Area in eastern North Carolina.¹ With only ten known red wolves left in the wild population, it is imperative that FWS act immediately to halt the extinction of the species in the wild.

The FWS's Red Wolf Recovery Program has been a global model for successful reintroductions of critically endangered and threatened species. As such, the plan currently being developed by FWS to resume the release of captive red wolves should look to the successful history of this program as a model. There is no reason to delay, especially given that there are practices and methods that have been proven to work over 27 years of successful implementation. FWS must take any and all necessary steps to ensure immediate conservation of the wild red wolf population.

For six years, FWS has failed to release any captive wolves into the wild population, and no wild pairs of red wolves have reproduced during the past two breeding seasons. The continued failure of the agency to resume its previously proven successful conservation measures has violated not only public trust, but also the Endangered Species Act. Due to these failures, the risk of extinction for the wild red wolf is significant, and we request that FWS do everything in its power to ensure the best chance of survival for any reintroduced wolves. Additionally, steps must be taken to support reproduction in the wild, which is critical to stabilizing the population and providing opportunities to resume the practice of fostering captive born pups into the wild.

Given this urgent situation, immediate action is needed to ensure a sustainable wild red wolf population in North Carolina and beyond. Specifically, we urge FWS to incorporate the following into its reintroduction plan:

¹ <https://abcnews.go.com/US/wireStory/judge-orders-plan-releasing-red-wolves-wild-75436820>

- Introduce breeding pairs into the wild, which would increase the chances of reproduction and establishment of territories.
- Ensure that wolves from captivity are released as soon as possible during times of the year that will ensure the greatest chance of individual survivorship and reproduction.
- Restart the coyote sterilization program and other strategies outlined in the Red Wolf Adaptive Management Program, which if implemented, would maintain viable genetics, which are crucial for the species' long-term viability.
- Utilize the entire five-county recovery area, and work with state agencies to identify more lands that could function as habitat for red wolves.
- Protect wild red wolves from gunshot mortalities through sincere and expanded engagement with local communities, including education programs, local partnerships, and addressing any landowner concerns. A comprehensive and participatory approach to community outreach is essential to the success of red wolf recovery.

A comprehensive plan, built around these principles, will be effective in conserving the red wolf for generations to come. Again, we urge the United States Fish and Wildlife Service to take the steps necessary to prevent the extinction of the wild population of the critically endangered American red wolf.

Sincerely,

A. Donald McEachin
Member of Congress

Raúl Grijalva
Member of Congress

Donald S. Beyer Jr.
Member of Congress

G. K. Butterfield
Member of Congress

/s/

David E. Price
Member of Congress

/s/

Alma S. Adams, Ph.D.
Member of Congress

/s/

Deborah Ross
Member of Congress

/s/

Nanette Diaz Barragán
Member of Congress

/s/

Earl Blumenauer
Member of Congress

/s/

Cori Bush
Member of Congress

/s/
David Cicilline
Member of Congress

/s/
Gerald E. Connolly
Member of Congress

/s/
Peter A. DeFazio
Member of Congress

/s/
Ted Deutch
Member of Congress

/s/
Jesús G. “Chuy” García
Member of Congress

/s/
Alcee L. Hastings
Member of Congress

/s/
Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress

/s/
Jared Huffman
Member of Congress

/s/
Sara Jacobs
Member of Congress

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Alan Lowenthal
Member of Congress

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Lucy McBath
Member of Congress

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Grace Meng
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Frank Pallone, Jr.
Member of Congress

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Mark Pocan
Member of Congress

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Mike Quigley
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Jamie Raskin
Member of Congress

/s/
Jan Schakowsky
Member of Congress

/s/
Robert C. “Bobby” Scott
Member of Congress

/s/
Darren Soto
Member of Congress

/s/
Rashida Tlaib
Member of Congress

/s/
Juan Vargas
Member of Congress

/s/
Nydia M. Velázquez
Member of Congress

/s/
James P. McGovern
Member of Congress