

America's
**ANIMAL
COMEBACKS**

Red Wolves

And Then There Were (Almost) None by Meish Goldish

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Red Wolves

And Then There Were (Almost) None



by Meish Goldish

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Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge

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Big Questions

It was an important day for the **biologists** at the Alligator River National Wildlife **Refuge** in North Carolina. They were about to let a pair of red wolves known as 140M and 231F go free. They were the first of eight red wolves to be **released** into the **wild**.



Many people greeted the red wolves when they arrived in North Carolina.

While excited about the release of the wolves, the biologists were also nervous. The eight adult wolves had spent all their lives in **captivity**. They had been raised and fed by people. Would they know how to hunt on their own? Could they raise **pups** in the wild? With no other wolves to help them, would these eight animals be able to survive?



The biologists released the red wolves on September 14, 1987. Before they were set free, there were no red wolves living anywhere in the wild.


The adult wolves ranged in age from three to six years old.

Changing Times

Thousands of years ago, two million wolves roamed freely across North America. About 100,000 of them were red wolves. Their territory stretched from what is now Texas to Florida and as far north as Maine. During this time, the wolves lived mostly in peace among the Native Americans.

Red Wolves in the Wild



 Where red wolves lived before the 1600s

Some scientists think red wolves may have once lived as far north as Canada.

Things changed, however, when European settlers came to America in the 1600s. They feared wolves. The popular fairy tale “Little Red Riding Hood” warned children about a “big bad wolf” that ate people. Farmers hated wolves because they attacked their sheep and other livestock. As a result, people began to kill them. The killings went on for hundreds of years. By the 1960s, red wolves were nearly **extinct**. Only about 17 remained in the wild.



Red wolves are shy animals. They are afraid of people and try to avoid them. There is no record of a healthy red wolf ever attacking a person.

Little Red Riding Hood and the “Big Bad Wolf”

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About the Author

Meish Goldish has written more than 100 books for children. His books *Florida Manatees: Warm Water Miracles* and *Gray Wolves: Return to Yellowstone* were recommended by the National Science Teachers Association in 2008.

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Red Wolves

And Then There Were (Almost) None

Was it too late to save the red wolf? For hundreds of years, these remarkable animals had roamed freely across the eastern United States. Yet by the 1960s, red wolves were pushed to the brink of extinction by hunting, habitat destruction, and disease. How would biologists and wildlife officials find a way to restore the population of red wolves in the wild?

American Alligators
Freshwater Survivors

American Bison
A Scary Prediction

Bald Eagles
A Chemical Nightmare

Black-footed Ferrets
Back from the Brink

California Condors
Saved by Captive Breeding

Florida Manatees
Warm Water Miracles

Florida Panthers
Struggle for Survival

Gray Wolves
Return to Yellowstone

Grizzly Bears
Saving the Silvertip

Red Wolves
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Southern Sea Otters
Fur-tastrophe Avoided

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