

Red wolf

DOMAIN
Eukaryota

KINGDOM
Animalia

PHYLUM
Chordata

CLASS
Mammalia

ORDER
Carnivora

FAMILY
Canidae

GENUS
Canis

SPECIES
C. rufus

WHERE DO THEY HANG OUT?

Red wolves are native to the southeastern United States. Historically, they ranged from Texas to Pennsylvania, but today they survive only in a small area of northeastern North Carolina.



A LOOK FOR THE SPOTLIGHT!

Red wolves are medium-sized canines, falling between coyotes and gray wolves in size. Adults typically measure 53-65 inches in length (including tail) and weigh around 45-85 pounds. They have a lean, long-legged build, large ears, and a relatively narrow muzzle, giving them an agile appearance. Their coat is usually tawny to grayish-brown, with a distinctive reddish tint on the ears, neck, and legs. Lighter markings often appear around the muzzle and eyes. Some individuals may appear darker overall, though truly melanistic (black) red wolves are rare and not typical of the species.



WHAT'S ON THE MENU?



Red wolves are carnivores and opportunistic hunters. Their diet includes:

- White-tailed deer
- Rabbits
- Rodents
- Raccoons
- Carriion (dead animals)

They play an important role in controlling prey populations and maintaining ecosystems.



Extinct
|
EX

Threatened
|
EW CR EN VU

Least Concern
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NT LC

FAMILY FIRST: LIFE IN A RED WOLF PACK

Red wolves live in small, close-knit family groups, typically consisting of a monogamous breeding pair and their offspring. They are mostly nocturnal hunters and highly territorial, using scent and vocalizations to defend their range. Both parents help raise pups, creating strong family bonds essential for survival.

WHY THEY MATTER

Red wolves play an important role in maintaining healthy ecosystems by helping control populations of animals like deer, rabbits, and raccoons. This reduces pressure on vegetation and supports balanced habitats. They also prey on invasive species such as nutria, helping protect wetlands. Conserving red wolves helps maintain stable ecosystems across their range.



THREATS TO THEIR SURVIVAL



Habitat loss



Vehicle
Collisions



Hybridization



Red wolves are Critically Endangered, with only a small wild population remaining in eastern North Carolina, centered around the Alligator River region. Once widespread across the southeastern United States, their range is now extremely limited. Today, major threats include vehicle collisions, human-caused mortality, habitat loss, and hybridization with coyotes. Conservation efforts—such as habitat protection, population management, and planned wildlife crossings—aim to reduce these risks and support their recovery.



*Did you
know?*

5 FUN FACTS ABOUT RED WOLVES

 Red wolves are among the rarest canines in the world, with only a very small wild population surviving today, making their conservation critical.

 They are monogamous, usually mating for life, and both parents work together to raise and protect their pups.

 Red wolves have traits of both gray wolves and coyotes, giving them a unique mix of size, behavior, and hunting skills.

 They use a variety of vocalizations like howls, barks, and yips to communicate, coordinate hunts, and defend their territory.

 Red wolves are strong swimmers and can navigate wetlands, rivers, and swamps, which helps them hunt and move safely in their habitat.