

6-12



Red Wolves Field Investigation Log



Visit the Red Wolf Woods exhibit. Choose a wolf to watch for up to five minutes. What did it do during that time?

How do you think these behaviors would help this animal to survive in its habitat?

Please describe how the red wolf's range has changed in the past 40 years.

How many red wolves were left in the wild before a breeding program was started here at Point Defiance Zoo and Aquarium?

What do you think caused red wolves to become endangered?

What can you do to help protect red wolves and other wildlife?

Conserve

Care

Connect

Discover

Red Wolves

Chaperone Field Investigation Guide



Visit the Red Wolf Woods exhibit Choose a wolf to watch for five minutes. What did your animal do during that time?

Make sure students time their observations. If the animal they chose to observe is inactive, ask them to think about why this might be. Students often describe animal behaviors in human terms (i.e. lazy, sad, depressed, etc.). Remind them that inactivity in the natural world usually just means that the animal is conserving energy so that they can do what they need to do to survive (i.e. find food, avoid predators, socialize, etc.)

How do you think these behaviors would help the wolf to survive in its habitat?

Red wolves are very shy and will often try to make themselves disappear into their surrounding. However, they will also walk around their exhibit, using their senses to be on alert for potential danger or interesting sights, sounds and smells. They also very social animals and will often interact with each other.

Please describe how the red wolf's range has changed?

Ask students to find the range maps and record their observations of how their range has changed.

FYI - Based on fossil and archaeological evidence, the original red wolf range extended throughout the Southeast, from the Atlantic and Gulf Coasts, north to the Ohio River valley and central Pennsylvania, and west to central Texas and southeastern Missouri. Now they only live completely wild at the Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge in North Carolina.

How many red wolves were left in the wild before a breeding program was started here at Point Defiance Zoo and Aquarium?

Only 14 wolves remained in the wild. These wolves were brought to Point Defiance to begin a breeding program. While this is a very small number of wolves, the almost 300 red wolves living in zoos and in the wild all came from that original group.

What do you think caused red wolves to become endangered?

First they were hunted for their pelts and out of fear. Many people believed that these wolves would be aggressive towards people and livestock. However, red wolves are very reserved and do their best to avoid people whenever possible. Secondly they were in competition with more aggressive coyotes and gray wolves for food. Lastly and most importantly, they have lost most of their habitat due to increases in the human population causing red wolves to be displaced.

What can you do the help protect red wolves and other wildlife?

If students need help with this question, guide them towards thinking about what they know about conservation in general. Encourage them to think about what they can do personally from home (use fewer resources, recycle, buy organic products, keep toxic chemicals out of the water). It is also very important to learn about wildlife and spread the word about how we can all work together to protect them.