

Breeding captive red wolves, no matter how successfully, is not the final solution to the red wolf's predicament. Mere preservation of the red wolf in captivity, where natural selection pressures do not operate, may only prolong its decline. A genetically inferior wolf could result after a few generations. Despite survival risks for transplanted animals, translocation—the reestablishment of wolves in a suitable habitat—needs to be the goal of a breeding program. A suitable release site is one where humans, coyotes, dogs, and livestock do not present a problem, and that includes adequate food, water, and cover. The number of sites meeting these criteria are limited, however, constraining the scope of translocation efforts.

While the FWS continues its search for suitable southeastern translocation sites, Bulls Island, SC, a part of the Cape Romain National Wildlife Refuge, has already been the site of translocation experiments involving mated pairs of red wolves. Such transplants allow biologists to study under controlled conditions the little-known behavior of the red wolf; establishment of a viable population was not their objective.

A mated pair offers the most chance for success in reestablishing a red wolf population, so for the Bulls Island trials, a pair named Buddy and Margie became the first experimental red wolf Adam and Eve. Initially the pair fared well, until Margie, spooked by something unknown, suddenly left the island and swam to the mainland. She later died of a uterine infection, and Buddy was subsequently returned to Tacoma.

That translocation of red wolves is indeed possible has been demonstrated by a second released pair named John and Judy, who stayed on the island for almost a year. The male, apparently enjoying the island's abundant marsh rabbits, gained 13 pounds. The lengthy duration of John and Judy's stay has provided a wealth of information on red wolf habits, increasing the probability of success in later translocation efforts.

Finally, perhaps the most difficult impediment to reestablishing the red wolf in the wild remains: man's attitude toward wolves. A site for reintroduction can't be selected without consent of the area's responsible political bodies, and, in turn, their constituents. Hopefully, the fear that made eradication a goal of predator control will become extinct, instead of the red wolf.—George J. Maurer, *National Wildlife Federation*.

New Federal Regulation Encourages Captive Breeding of Endangered Species

A marked increase in captive breeding of endangered species is the anticipated result of a new regulation issued by the Department of the Interior's U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The rule eases federal

regulation of interstate transfer of certain captive species covered by the Endangered Species Act of 1973.

The action was prompted by evidence that stringent regulatory procedures have led to decreased breeding by zoological parks, bird breeders, and others. Breeders have pointed out that tough federal restrictions—while intended to protect and propagate such species—have sometimes had the opposite effect. In some cases, persons who would otherwise breed endangered species have ceased to do so or have limited the number of offspring produced because they could not be readily transferred to other facilities.

Under the new regulation, a zoo, wildlife park, aquarium, and other organizations or individuals can register with the Fish and Wildlife Service to become a licensed shipper and receiver of captive-born endangered species. After registration, reports will be required annually.

Wildlife affected by the regulation includes non-native U.S. endangered species and native U.S. endangered species that are sufficiently protected from unauthorized taking or are in low demand. The rule provides that native species will be designated on a case-by-case basis. One species, the Laysan teal, was designated in the rulemaking.

Formerly, breeders were required to obtain a federal permit before engaging in interstate commerce or exporting of captive-bred wildlife. This time-consuming process led to higher maintenance costs of animals awaiting shipment, increased difficulties in handling adult animals instead of young ones, and unavailability of breeding stock when needed.

The Fish and Wildlife Service determined that activities involving captive wildlife should be regulated as required by the Endangered Species Act, but only to the extent necessary to conserve the species. According to service biologists, the new regulation should help reduce inbreeding—which has been cited as a factor in juvenile mortality—by facilitating exchange of animals. It is also hoped that the rule will reduce the demand for wildlife that might otherwise be taken from its natural habitat.

Fallout Linked to Sheep Deaths

Ranchers in Nevada are going back to court to fight a battle they lost in 1956 over government reparations for 4,200 sheep lost near an atomic testing site. A newly-released private report by a former member of the Atomic Energy Commission's (AEC) Fallout Studies Branch has scientifically connected the deaths of the sheep, which were wintering 50 miles from the testing ground, with the radiation fallout. The earlier case had been lost because government scientists claimed

there was no connection between the deaths and the fallout, stating that the sheep had died of natural causes. The report also noted that some of the sheep had been grazing in areas where the reported fallout was within safety levels set by the AEC.

Throw Another Log on the Fire

Wood now provides Americans with half as much energy as nuclear power does, according to the Department of Energy. Since the 1973-74 oil embargo, the use of wood as fuel has expanded nearly 15 percent a year. Between 1972 and 1977, the number of woodburning stoves in use has increased from 250,000 to 2,000,000. One-fifth of the homes in Northern New England rely on wood as their primary heat source, and 30 percent more use it as a supplemental source.

Kenya Large Mammal Census

A Canadian aid program, the Kenya Rangeland Ecological Monitoring Unit (KREMU), has recently completed its first aerial count of selected species of animals. It reports that there are 60,000 elephants in Kenya, compared with a count of 167,000 made by a game biologist in 1973.

The loss of 100,000 elephants in five years correlates closely with World Wildlife Fund figures obtained from the sales of raw ivory recorded in customs and excise figures in various countries. In 1976, 280 tons, or the tusks of 23,000 elephants, were sold as raw ivory from Kenya, according to the Fund in Kenya.

The rhino, whose horn is regarded by many peoples in undeveloped countries as an aphrodisiac, is much nearer extinction than the elephant. KREMU counted only 1,800 rhinos in Kenya, compared with 11,500 in 1963. Since then, 52,800 lbs. of rhino horn from 11,000 rhinos have been exported from Kenya, according to customs records.

How to Spruce up Those Hard-to-Reach Feathers? Try an Ant or Two

Crows as well as blue jays and magpies, and probably other birds as well, practice a curious skill known as "anting." Anting consists of picking up ants with the beak, squashing them and then rubbing them into the feathers that are not often reached by regular grooming practices. The ants are usually those which eject either acidic or pungent anal fluids when squashed.

The purpose for all this? Apparently, say some experts, it's to kill or drive away many of the harmful parasites which infect birds. Crows in captivity sometimes also use smoldering cigarette butts to keep pesky parasites off their plumage. 15



1980. "Fallout Linked to Sheep Deaths." *Field Museum of Natural History bulletin* 51(4), 15–15.

View This Item Online: <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/item/20812>

Permalink: <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/partpdf/376292>

Holding Institution

University Library, University of Illinois Urbana Champaign

Sponsored by

University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign

Copyright & Reuse

Copyright Status: In copyright. Digitized with the permission of the Chicago Field Museum.
For information contact dcc@library.uiuc.edu.

Rights Holder: Field Museum of Natural History

This document was created from content at the **Biodiversity Heritage Library**, the world's largest open access digital library for biodiversity literature and archives. Visit BHL at <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org>.