

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

August 14, 2025

**MEDIA CONTACT**

Emily Evans, Communications Manager

[emily@wolfhaven.org](mailto:emily@wolfhaven.org)

360.264.4695 x217 | 360.506.0075

**Washington-born American Red Wolf helps increase wild population with litter of eight pups**

TENINO, WA – In April 2025, critically endangered American Red Wolf, M2191, produced a litter of eight pups in the Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge of eastern North Carolina. This litter represents a minimum 25% increase in the total wild population of American Red Wolves, marking a significant conservation success and milestone. M2191 was released into the territory of the Milltail pack in January 2024 following the death of the pack's former breeding male, M2323. Shortly after his release, M2191 produced a litter of eight pups with the pack's breeding female, F2225. This year, however, M2191 mated with F2503 – the two-year-old daughter of F2225 and M2323.

While young wolves often disperse to new territories, some may displace their pack's breeder and take over that position for themselves. F2503 pushed her mother out of the Milltail pack territory during mating season this year but has since welcomed her back to help raise the pups. F2225's support of the pups increases their chances of survival and at least five of the eight pups are still noted to be on the landscape, being closely monitored by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) team.

In addition to the Milltail pack's litter, an additional eight pups across three other wild packs have been documented by USFWS this year, representing a major boost for the species' recovery. Only 28 to 31 American Red Wolves are estimated to be living in their native North Carolina habitat, making them the most endangered canid species in the world. Once abundant across the eastern seaboard, aggressive predator control and habitat loss reduced the wild American Red Wolf population to a mere 14 wolves by the late 1970s. The Endangered Species Act prevented the complete eradication of the American Red Wolf and a recovery plan was developed by USFWS to manage and oversee this critically endangered species. The program is called Saving Animals From Extinction (SAFE).

Wolf Haven International, a globally recognized and award-winning wolf sanctuary in Tenino, Washington, has participated in the American Red Wolf SAFE program since 2003 and the Mexican Wolf SAFE program since 1994 (formerly Species Survival Plan/SSP programs). Wolf Haven follows strict guidelines when caring for SAFE animals, with human presence kept to a minimum and observations done via remote camera.

M2191 (house-named Finch while under human care) was born at Wolf Haven in 2016, and for more than seven years, Wolf Haven's animal care team worked diligently to ensure he remained as wild as possible while also preparing him for the possibility of release, which finally became a reality in 2024. "The continued success of M2191 fills me with great hope for a growing wild population of American Red Wolves," says Judah Jamison, Wolf Haven's Lead Animal Care Specialist & American Red Wolf SAFE Liaison. "I am so grateful for the extraordinary work being done by the USFWS team leading this recovery, as well as all of our SAFE partners."

M2191 is the second American Red Wolf from Wolf Haven to be released into the wild in North Carolina, following the release of F2216 (house-named Iris) in 2021. In addition to these pivotal releases and M2191's two subsequent wild-born litters, five litters of American Red Wolves have been born at Wolf Haven in the past 20 years. Wolf Haven also continues to make important contributions to non-invasive research projects on feeding, breeding, and behavior monitoring of wolves under human care.

For more information about Wolf Haven's American Red Wolf and Mexican wolf conservation efforts, please visit [wolfhaven.org/conservation/SAFE](https://wolfhaven.org/conservation/SAFE). Updates from USFWS on the wild American Red Wolf population can be found at [fws.gov/project/red-wolf-recovery-program](https://fws.gov/project/red-wolf-recovery-program).