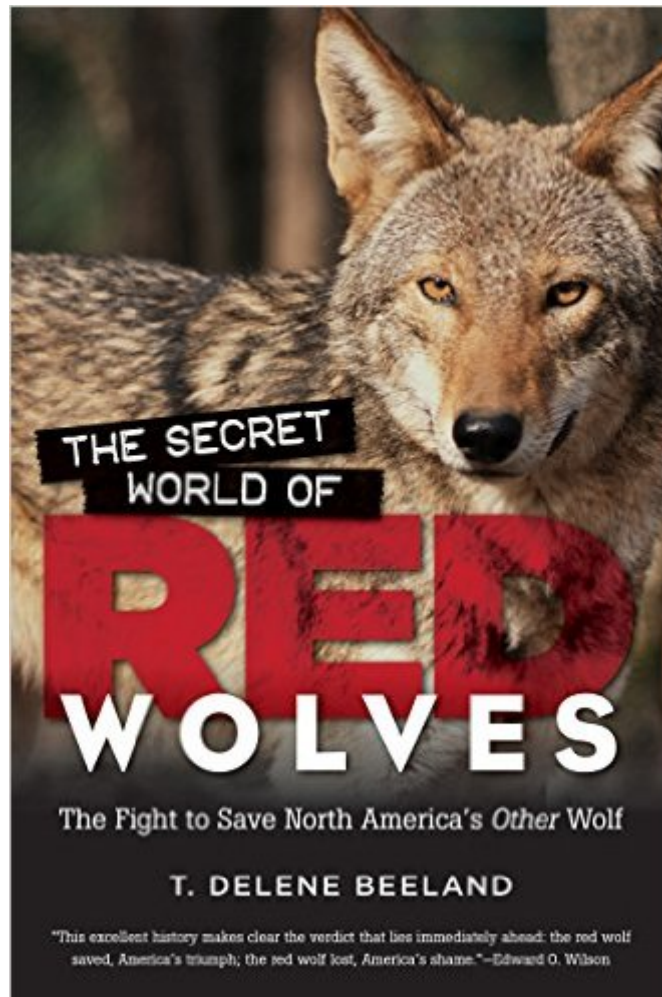


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The Secret World Of Red Wolves: The Fight To Save North America's Other Wolf



Synopsis

Red wolves are shy, elusive, and misunderstood predators. Until the 1800s, they were common in the longleaf pine savannas and deciduous forests of the southeastern United States. However, habitat degradation, persecution, and interbreeding with the coyote nearly annihilated them. Today, reintroduced red wolves are found only in peninsular northeastern North Carolina within less than 1 percent of their former range. In *The Secret World of Red Wolves*, nature writer T. DeLene Beeland shadows the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's pioneering recovery program over the course of a year to craft an intimate portrait of the red wolf, its history, and its restoration. Her engaging exploration of this top-level predator traces the intense effort of conservation personnel to save a species that has slipped to the verge of extinction. Beeland weaves together the voices of scientists, conservationists, and local landowners while posing larger questions about human coexistence with red wolves, our understanding of what defines this animal as a distinct species, and how climate change may swamp its current habitat.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I'm not familiar with science writing awards, but I do think *The Secret World of Red Wolves* deserves one. Ms. Beeland's prose makes for easy reading, even though some of the topics covered in the book can be quite complex. Her research is thorough and presented in a way a layman can understand and find interesting. There is an excellent introductory chapter followed by chapters about her hands-on experience shadowing Fish and Wildlife biologists as they work to

protect the last population of wild red wolves. The most interesting part of the book for me began with Chapter 8 when Ms. Beeland covered the controversy over theories of the red wolf origin as a species. The rest of the book is about the history of the red wolf from colonial times to its near extinction to its partial recovery with the help of the red wolf program. Man caused the near extinction of this species, and only man has the power to bring it back. Unfortunately, due to inbreeding with coyotes and human poaching, man will probably always have to take an active role in protecting this species. This book is a must read for anyone interested in North American ecology and endangered species. It should have a wide appeal for scientists and laymen alike.

I just finished reading this book, and I absolutely loved it. Not only does the red wolf get a literally update, but the book was told with a great awareness of the complex circumstances of surrounding this animal. Although the author does at times give her opinion on the different controversies, it is not overwhelming in the least. In fact, I would say that the book appears completely neutral aside for sentences where she explicitly says her opinion. As someone who has followed the red wolf controversies since high school, it is not easy to tell people about red wolves without taking a side. The book also addressed the people behind red wolf conservation. It is heartening to hear about the dedication and hard work of Americans trying to right the ecological wrongs of the past. The author also interviewed locals around the red wolf reintroduction area. These included the opinions of those who are against the presence of red wolves in their state. She did so maintaining her integrity and the integrity of her interviewees. The only thing I found missing from the book, which would knock it down a half a star, is the lack of color photos in the two sections with pictures. Having said that, compared to most nature/conservation books, this book is pretty cheap. I kept the 5 stars because cost is probably the reason behind the lack of color photos. As someone who often can't afford to buy every nature book on my book list, I appreciate the price of the work. Therefore, the two points cancel each other out in my opinion. In conclusion, I look forward to reading Ms. Beeland's future works. This book is a great debut for this first time author.

There are wonderful books that appeal only to limited audiences. Here is a wonderful book that has something appealing for everyone - scientists, wolf managers, animals lovers, students, teachers, young people and the young at heart. Even people who aren't so sure they favor having wolves on the landscape will find this book captivating because it reveals the history and the "way of the red wolf" without preaching. The author has spent years researching this elusive animal, but this is no encyclopedic rendition. The fascinating facts are there, as they should be, but Beeland tells stories -

wonderful, first-person engaging stories of her interactions with the field biologists and with the wolves themselves. This is a book you will want to buy and read and keep and read again.

As the gray wolf war rages on in the west, another problem has been unfolding along the east coast without all the headlines. During the month of November 2013, 6 red wolves were illegally killed within a month in NC. Thus, it's the perfect time to go and grab a copy of *The Secret World of Red Wolves: The Fight to Save North America's Other Wolf* by T. Delene Beeland. Appreciation stimulates conservation, and this book will certainly make you appreciate these fascinating canines. Beeland divides the book up into three main parts: 1) The Red Wolf Today; 2) The Red Wolf Yesterday; and 3) The Red Wolf Tomorrow. Within these sections, Beeland uses the wealth of information that she has accumulated through experience and research to tell this grand story of *Canis rufus*. Lots of important science is weaved throughout the story. Part I covers several seasons. Through hiking in the field and interviewing the biologists, Beeland is able to relay the current status of these wolves. Readers will be surprised to learn that red wolves were, in fact, the very first wolves introduced in the United States, that they actually benefit the ecosystem by eating nonnative nutria, and that they are actually more scared of you than you are of them. Part II deals with taxonomic history of the red wolf, their early decline because of settlers' fear of "big bad" wolves, and the history of how they came to be reintroduced in NC. Part III discusses what types of things still need to happen for this recovery effort to be successful. This is a book every North Carolinian interested in science should read because this great effort is taking place in our backyard. It is a book anyone interested in the need for apex predators should read. Beeland's vast knowledge and enthusiasm make this a book that is hard to put down.

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