

2001 Findings Report on the Shackleford Banks Horses

Federal legislation, passed in 1998, protects the horses within Cape Lookout National Seashore and requires an annual report on the status of the herd. In April 1999, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the National Park Service and the Foundation for Shackleford Horses, Inc., for joint management of the horses on Shackleford Banks.

The January 2001 roundup confirmed 131 horses on the island; this compares to 114 in January 1999 and 130 in January 2000. During the roundups, 12 horses were removed for public adoption by the Foundation in 2000 and 20 were removed in 2001. One of the 2000 and five of the 2001 adoptees were selected to augment a wild herd in the Cedar Island area of eastern North Carolina.

All horses captured (130) tested negative for Equine Infectious Anemia for the third consecutive year.

As of the January census dates, the herd size had increased by 17 foals in 1998, 23 foals in 1999, and 17 foals in 2000. The female-to-male herd proportion has increased slightly since 1999 and in January 2001 was right on the center of the historic range of 55% females and 45% males. The herd has arranged itself into approximately 19 harems and 4 bachelor bands.

During the 2000 roundup, 31 mares received an initial inoculation of Porcine Zona Pellucida (PZP). This was the first use of PZP in the park. The initial dose is a primer and does not prevent contraception for the coming year but prepares the immune system for any subsequent doses. Twenty-one of these mares received a booster dose in the spring of 2000; none of those mares tested pregnant for 2001. Gestation in horses is approximately 11 months. Between 10 and 15 foals are expected in 2001.

During the 2001 roundup, 16 additional mares received an initial (not for contraception in 2001) dose of PZP. Nineteen mares received field-administered boosters to prevent fertilization in 2001 (and subsequent foaling in 2002).

A 2002 roundup is not planned, but a partial roundup in 2003 is possible.

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