



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the
Interior

Cape Lookout National
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Cape Lookout National Seashore News Release

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For Immediate Release

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Shackleford Banks Horses 2005 Findings Report

Harkers Island, North Carolina. Federal legislation, passed in 1998, protects the horses within Cape Lookout National Seashore and requires an annual report on the status of the herd. This report covers the spring 2005 to spring 2006 time period. The horses are cooperatively managed by the National Park Service and the Foundation for Shackleford Horses, Inc., pursuant to the legislation and a Memorandum of Understanding signed in 1999.

There are 112 horses on Shackleford Banks. Thirteen foals were born in 2005. Two died of unknown causes at less than 2 months of age; the third succumbed to early placental separation. Three foal deaths are within normal limits for wild horses and for Shackleford Banks. Four healthy young horses were removed for public adoption through the Foundation in February and March of 2006 and have adoptive homes.

Adult mortality was average; the four who died were, by chance, all females. One died of old age at 18 years and another died at 14. The latter was thin due to mobility difficulties - a curled hoof - and teeth occlusion problems. Birth control in their later years allowed both of these mares to feed only themselves and extended their lives. One mare died of a uterine infection which also caused the loss of her foal (mentioned above). One mare died of unknown causes in the spring; she had never received birth control and had tested pregnant the previous winter.


Of the mares who foaled, three had been given birth control in the past but did not receive it in 2004 in order for them to potentially conceive and foal. Six foals were from mares who had never received birth control; four of these foals lived.

Porcine Zonae Pellucidae (PZP) is the birth control used on Shackleford Banks. This immunocontraceptive is authorized for use by the United States Food and Drug Administration and regulated by the Humane Society of the United States. Three mares foaled after receiving PZP last year. PZP is generally considered to be 90% effective. Since its use began here in 2000 it has been 92% effective on Shackleford Banks.

Pregnancy test results are not yet available but ten to fifteen foals are expected in 2006.

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For further information, contact Dr. Sue Stuska, Wildlife Biologist – Horses, at Cape Lookout National Seashore, (252) 728-2250, ext. 3017, or Carolyn S. Mason, Chairman and President, Foundation for Shackleford Horses, Inc., (252) 728-6308.

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