



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Cape Lookout National Seashore

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Cape Lookout National Seashore News Release

March 24, 2010

For Immediate Release

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Shackleford Banks Horses 2009 Findings Report

Harkers Island, N.C. - - Federal legislation, passed in 1998, protects the wild horses within Cape Lookout National Seashore and requires an annual report on the status of the herd. This report covers the period from April 2009 through March 2010. 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 updated in 2007.

There are 114 horses on Shackleford Banks. Five foals were born in 2009; one died shortly after birth. Four young horses were removed to go to adoptive homes. The Foundation handles public adoptions and has horses available.

Adult mortality was above average. Lost were: one 8 year old, two 17 year olds, one 21 year old and two 24 year olds. Of the 114 horses, the oldest living horse is 28. The second oldest living horse is 27; she has a yearling colt born in 2009.

Birth control was administered to 27 of the 66 mares in 2009. Each dose is generally expected to last for the breeding season (one summer). When mares are dosed over a number of years their return to fertility takes longer than if they are dosed once. Mares who did not receive birth control in 2009 are either desired as parents for lineage reasons or have received a number of boosters in the past.

Porcine Zonae Pellucidae (PZP) is the birth control used on Shackleford Banks horses. This immunocontraceptive is authorized for use by the United States Food and Drug Administration and regulated by the Humane Society of the United States.

At least two foals are expected in 2010, with several mares not yet tested for pregnancy. One of the pregnant mares is from a less well represented line, so her foal will be a welcome addition to the genetic base of the herd.

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. For young horse adoption information, contact Anita Kimball at (252) 241- 5222 or Joy Lawrence, evenings, at (252) 728- 7111.

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