



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Cape Lookout National Seashore

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Cape Lookout National Seashore News Release

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Shackleford Banks Horses 2008 Findings Report

Harkers Island, N.C. -- 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 from Spring 2008 to Spring 2009. 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 123 horses on Shackleford Banks. Fifteen foals were born in 2008. One died before being identified. Four young horses were removed to go to adoptive homes. The Foundation handles public adoptions and has horses available.

Adult mortality was average; a twenty-one-year-old stallion died in February and a twenty-two-year-old mare died in March. Two adults were humanely euthanized; one for crippling arthritis and the other for a broken humerus. The four oldest living mares are 25 to 27 years old and the oldest living stallions are 23 and 24.

Birth control was administered to 26 of the 66 mares in the spring of 2008. Each birth control dose lasts for one breeding season (one summer). Mares who did not receive the booster are either desired as parents for lineage reasons or have received a number of boosters in the past.

Porcine Zona Pellucida (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. PZP is generally more than 90% effective.

Approximately six foals are expected in 2009. 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. After paternity is determined, foals from well-represented female and male lines may be removed. Removed youngsters will be available for adoption to the public; contact the Foundation for an application.

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

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