

SE Red Fox Symposium  
Roundtable Notes  
January 20, 2010

Panelists: Jeff Owen, Colleen Olfenbuttel, Maureen Dewire, Katharine Womble, Jean Lynch, Laura Simon, Dr. Kirt Rusenko

Facilitator: Joanne Harcke

Note taker: Paula Gillikin

- Fox management and ecology
  - Removal of one species can lead to an increase in another.
  - Study demonstrated that lethal control of raccoons to protect sea turtles backfired; increased ghost crab population.
  - Use of non lethal deterrents such as habanero pepper probably does not cause ecosystem-wide effects since it is used in a discrete area and breaks down quickly.
  - Consider other species that might immigrate into the area such as coyotes, raccoons, etc. when developing management action.
  
- Humane considerations
  - Public increasingly wants to see humane solutions to problems.
  - Concerns about trapping and suffering.
  - Terry Krieger published data on foothold traps demonstrating great stress on animal.
  - Box traps can cause injuries, too, particularly to the teeth.
  - Humane Society of the United States considers trapping (except in special cases) as causing an unacceptable level of stress.
  - The NC Wildlife Resources Commission uses certain types of traps for research purposes.
  - Humane Society of the United States used traps outfitted with telemetry transmitters to capture feral cats. More humane to leave animal in trap for minimum time period.
  - Non-target species can be caught in traps, although this can be minimized if a skilled trapper is hired.
  - Important to distinguish between trapping for management and recreational trapping.
  - To be as humane as possible, Fort Fisher uses gunshot to remove foxes instead of trapping.
  - Humane issues are debatable, especially when the *only* option is to remove foxes after all non-lethal methods have failed.
  - Immuno-contraception may be effective for controlling red foxes.
  
- Site specific considerations
  - Fox behavior seems to vary site-by-site.

- Need to assess management options on a site-by-site basis.
- Important to consider fox density and behavior as it relates to human use of sites.
- Fox behavior and density often affected by human presence.
- Always consider other species that may cause problems on the site in the future (ie raccoons, coyotes, and others) when developing management responses.
  
- Changing human behaviors
  - Creative marketing campaigns to stop wildlife feeding are crucial.
  - Address ALL types of wildlife feeding, perhaps even birds (when practicable).
  - Educating kids is important, as they are often the most impacted by presentations and programs; they are highly impressionable.
  - Public needs to receive “do not feed wildlife” message from several different agencies and institutions (eg media, parks, museums).
  
- Challenges of fox management
  - Adjacent property owners may or may not cooperate or “do their part.”
  - Lethal removal has to be consistent to be effective; a one-time removal will not be effective in the long-term.
  - Public may not support lethal management.
  - Managing foxes may require a combination of lethal and non-lethal techniques.