



ALABAMA WILDLIFE

VOLUME FOUR

Conservation and Management Recommendations for Imperiled Wildlife

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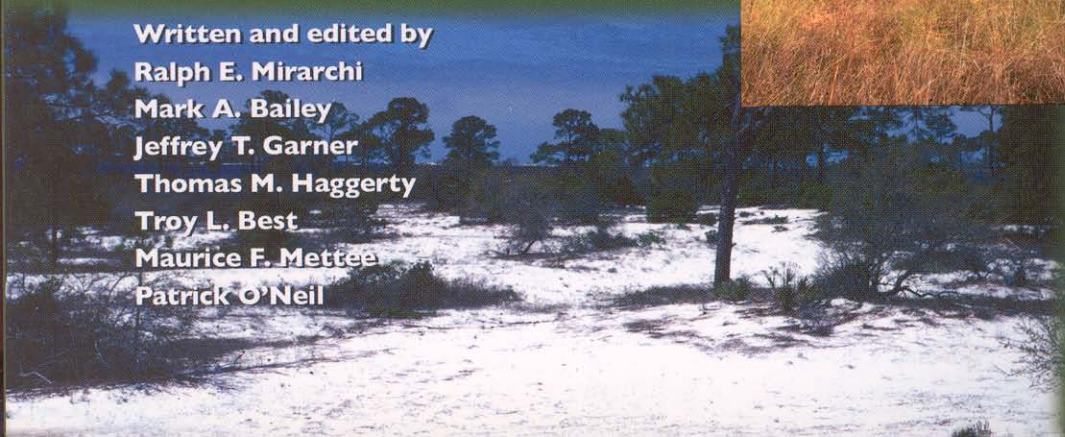
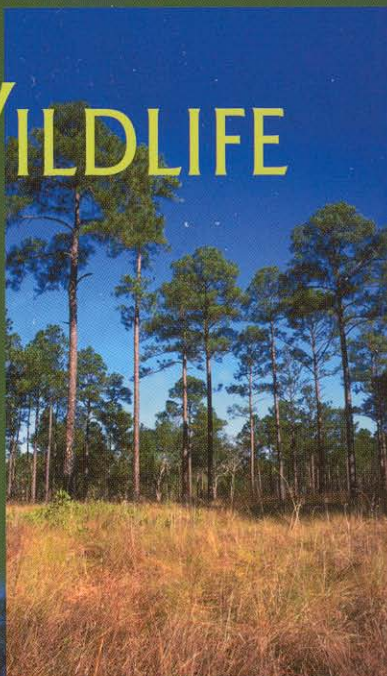
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RED WOLF

Canis rufus Audubon and Bachman

Suitable habitats and the prey base exist for reintroduction of the red wolf into Alabama, particularly in wilderness areas of our national forests and large tracts of private or state-owned lands, such as the Mobile-Tensaw Delta in northern Mobile and Baldwin Counties. However, potential obstacles to successful introduction also exist. Prior to any reintroduction effort, a survey of public attitudes regarding reintroduction would be necessary and reasonable efforts would have to be made to insure public safety and to eliminate, reduce, or compensate any damage to domestic livestock caused by any reintroduction. Because cooperation of the public is essential for a successful reintroduction program, a significant effort also would have to be made to gain public support *before* initiation of such. Where needed, efforts to modify public attitudes through educational programs must be implemented. Overall, public attitudes could be changed using a variety of educational programs in public schools, programs on radio and television, and written information to inform the public about the red wolf as part of our natural heritage. Interactions between the coyote and reintroduced red wolves also may significantly reduce chances for a successful reestablishment program. Coyotes occur in all habitats and are statewide in distribution in Alabama. Because of similar habitat requirements and diet, and because of potential hybridization, reintroduction of red wolves in areas dominated by coyotes probably would not be successful. Attempts to reintroduce red wolves into the state would have to occur where coyote populations are naturally low, and/or have been lowered through intense removal efforts.

Prepared by: Troy L. Best