

Majestic wild horses are being chased, bitten by unleashed dogs roaming Outer Banks

May 14 2019, by Mark Price



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Free roaming dogs have become the latest threat facing the wild horses living on North Carolina's Outer Banks, according to the Corolla Wild Horse Fund.

The problem isn't [wild dogs](#), but rather tourists' unleashed pets, which are harassing, chasing and even biting the [horses](#), says herd manager Meg Puckett.

On Monday, she posted a video showing the harassment in action, as a herd on the beach tried to fend off a dog. One horse becomes so angry that it can be seen with its mouth open, trying to bite the canine, Puckett pointed out.

There have been three incident reports in the last week of [dogs](#) "chasing and harassing the horses," Puckett said on Facebook.

That's an unheard of number, Puckett told *The Charlotte Observer*, and she is at a loss to explain why there have suddenly been so many.

"In one case, we were told that a dog actually bit one of the horses. This is so incredibly dangerous, for both the dog and the horses," Puckett wrote on Facebook.

"This dog's life was certainly in danger and he is very lucky that the stallion did not severely injure or kill him. It's also lucky that no humans were injured during this incident. Spooked, defensive horses are unpredictable and could have turned that aggression towards people, or they could have trampled beachgoers," she wrote.

It is believed all the incidents involved domestic animals and not wild dogs, she said.

Among her fears is that the horses may become aggressive any time dogs are present, "even if (the horses) aren't provoked," she wrote on Facebook.

It is illegal for dogs to roam unleashed in Currituck County, even on

beaches, Puckett said. It's also illegal for people to get within 50 feet of the [wild horses](#), no matter how well-intentioned the reason, according to VisitCurrituck.com.

The nonprofit Corolla Wild Horse Fund protects and manages a herd of nearly 100 on Corolla, which is believed descended from colonial stallions brought to the Outer Banks by early explorers in the 1500s, according to the fund's web site. There is also a [herd](#) of the wild horses on the nearby Shackleford Banks.

Construction of new homes and increased traffic have been the biggest threat to the horses, the fund says.

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