

WILD AND FREE

P.O. Box 361
Corolla, NC 27927

TROOPER'S LESSON

The Mission of the Corolla Wild Horse Fund is to protect, conserve, and responsibly manage the herd of wild Colonial Spanish Mustangs roaming freely on the northernmost Currituck Outer Banks, and to promote the continued preservation of this land as a permanent sanctuary for horses designated as the State Horse and defined as a cultural treasure by the state of North Carolina.



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In early March we observed a young stallion who was underweight and had a terrible limp. His left knee was badly swollen and he was pretty lethargic. Understandably, we were concerned for his wellbeing, so we took photographs and video to send to our vet. We felt fairly certain that we would have to pull this poor guy off the beach so that we could treat him at the rehab farm.

Our wonderful vet got back to us immediately and said that she thought it was very possible that the stallion had fractured or even broken his knee. She recommended capture and removal so we started to develop a plan to safely catch him and get him to the farm. Unfortunately, he seemed to disappear into the woods without a trace. CWHF staff and Carova residents were



on the lookout for him for over a month, but with no success. We resigned ourselves to the possibility that the poor guy didn't make it, but continued to search for him anyway.

Then at the beginning of April we found him! He was in the woods off of Red Snapper Lane and was actually looking better. We couldn't believe it! He still had a swollen knee and was underweight but he wasn't lame anymore and he was much perkier — he wanted nothing to do with us humans and hoofed it back into the woods pretty quickly. We were so relieved. After that second sighting, we started to see him out and about more often. By the end of April and beginning of May, it was clear that the stallion had healed himself. It was a reminder to all of us that these horses are so hardy, strong, and very capable of taking care of themselves.

The decision to intervene or to let nature take its course can be incredibly difficult. It is one of the challenges that we have to face and accept as part of our mission. These horses are wild, and they have survived here on the Outer Banks for many generations without human intervention. The Fund is their advocate and their protector, and sometimes that means just letting them be Banker horses. They are survivors and they humble us every single day with their strength. We started calling this little black stallion Trooper, because he certainly is one.



Welcome Baby!

The first foal of the season—a colt, was born in April and spotted in Carova in early May. He lives with his family in the northern part of the refuge, close to the Virginia line. Both of his parents are very protective of the baby and have been quick to shield him from humans whenever they come in contact with them. Mom was a bit on the thin side right after giving birth, but that's to be expected with a wild mare. Having a baby and then feeding it takes a lot of energy and calories, but now that the spring grass has come in she is looking much better.

Most mares in the herd, especially those younger than four and older than ten, are darted with a non-hormonal birth control called PZP once a year. This prevents them from having foals every year, making it easier for them to maintain an optimum body condition score and helping maintain the health and genetic diversity of the herd at large. However, over the past decade there have been between six and ten births a year—a healthy number!

The new colt's name is Mateo.



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All proceeds benefit the CWHF.

Fast Facts: Spring/Summer 2017

5	The Henneke Body Condition Scoring System is a standardized scoring system used to evaluate the body condition of horses, regardless of breed, age, or confirmation. The scale runs from 1-9, with 1 being emaciated and 9 being obese. The ideal BCS is a 5. We make a note of each horse's BCS each time they are observed.
55-5 million	The number of years that have passed since horses first appeared in North America. They were small—about the size of a fox, and wear patterns on fossilized teeth suggest that they were fruit eaters. They also had four toes.
8 feet	The record high jump made by a horse in Chile in 1949. Banker horses are quite skilled at jumping, but they would be hard pressed to clear something that high!
20-30 years	The lifespan of a domestic horse. Of course, some do live well into their 30s, or even 40s. The wild horses' lifespan is a bit lower, but in recent years some wild Corolla horses have been living into their 20s. Much of this has to do with improved health due to the use of the contraceptive PZP.
200-2000	The average weight of a horse is around 1,000 pounds but they can range from 200 pounds (miniature horses) to 2,000 pounds (heavy draft horses). Corolla horses generally weigh in somewhere between 600 and 800 pounds.
1%-2%	Horses eat between 1-2% of their body weight in roughage (grass and other forage) per day. This means that they spend the majority of their time grazing.

