



White Paper Report  
The Truth about Predator Control  
**Why mammals are being trapped and killed**  
in the Cape Hatteras National Seashore Recreational Area



People who love animals are shocked when they discover that the federal government has an on-going program to trap and kill hundreds of mammals in the Cape Hatteras National Seashore Recreational Area on the Outer Banks of North Carolina.

Why? In an attempt to protect a few species of shorebirds and sea turtles, the federal government has decided to trap and kill their natural predators.



*Piping Plover*

This controversial program, euphemistically called “Predator Removal,” involves a small number of federally designated species, including the Piping Plover (*Charadrius melodus*), as well as some non-federally listed shorebirds. The program also covers a few species of endangered sea turtles. However, none of the protected birds are classified as endangered, yet their natural predators are systemically trapped and killed.

The mammals targeted for annihilation include Raccoon, Otter, Fox, Mink, Opossum, Muskrat and Nutria.

Over 700 of these innocent mammals have been killed since 2002. This does not include the death toll for 2009, which has not yet been released by the National Park Service.



*Raccoons*



*Fox*

The predator removal program has reached a zenith of public attention ever since a few special interest groups filed a lawsuit against the National Park Service. This led to implementation of an unpopular consent decree that has seen the continuation of this controversial program in America’s first national seashore.

Sadly, none of the special interest groups, who claim to defend wildlife, have raised their voice in defense of hundreds of these targeted mammals that have been systematically murdered.



*Nutria*

For example, in 2008, the year that the consent decree went into effect, some 238 raccoons, otters, foxes, possum, mink, muskrat and nutria were destroyed, simply because they happen to be natural predators to shorebirds in nature’s circle of life.

*Mink*



Dare County Commissioner, Jack Shea in an Op-Ed article wrote, “The environmentalists claim they want to protect wildlife, especially the innocent baby birds. But, what happens to the innocent baby raccoons, fox and mink whose murdered mother will never return home to the den?”

Commissioner Shea asks a series of probing questions, “Is the life of one species more precious than others? If so, who decides? Where is the outrage? Why do the “environmentalists” not

advocate protection for all species? Why have they not raised their voice in defense of these slaughtered mammals?”

*Otter*



He concludes, “Perhaps their silence reveals the pragmatic truth that the greatest threat to birds and turtles is from natural predators, not humans. Instead, they loudly condemn recreational access while touting a party line that tries to make humans the villain.”



*Park Service employee with a rifle aiming at a small mammal on the beach*

Learn how you can help in the effort to protect wildlife and provide reasonable recreational access at [www.PreserveBeachAccess.org](http://www.PreserveBeachAccess.org)