

The Wild Horses of the Outer Banks of North Carolina

(September 2019)

As Hurricane Dorian moved up the East Coast of the United States, leaving destruction in its wake, many people wondered how the wild horses of the Outer Banks of North Carolina would fare. After all, many people and animals had been injured or killed in the wake of the unrelenting nature of the storm. How could unsheltered horses survive? The truth is these colonial Spanish mustangs are never evacuated during bad weather. Rather, they use an impressive but simple method they've employed for centuries to ride out tough times: they huddle together—backs and bottoms to the wind and rain!

The wild horses of the Outer Banks know what they're doing when it comes to hurricanes, mostly because they've been doing it for so long. When instinct kicks in, they move to higher ground, specifically under the oak trees of the island. They know this is a dry and safe place to hide out.

The wild horses of the Outer Banks are thought to be descendants of the mustangs brought over by Spanish explorers long ago. The Outer Banks herd is made up of several groups, or harems, of horses. Each harem consists of a stallion and a group of mares. Typically, the harems keep to

themselves, but during a storm, the different harems come together. There's strength in numbers, as the old saying goes.

The Corolla Wild Horse Fund is an organization that works hard to take care of the Outer Banks herd. It is confident the wild horses will make it through. In fact, the Fund maintains that the horses are better equipped to face big storms than humans. However, before bad weather, the Fund makes preparations for its rescue farm where sick and injured wild horses are brought to be rehabilitated. Before Dorian, the rescue farm filled up its troughs with extra hay, grain, and water. Each horse had an ID tag braided into its mane. The farm manager stayed at the farm with them. Now that's dedication!

The wild horses of the Outer Banks have been around for 500 years, so they've weathered a storm or two. And as far as anyone knows or remembers, they've always made it through just fine.

Teacher Resources – Vocabulary

Potential Words for Further Study: These words not only help with comprehension of the passage, they also appear more frequently in a wide spectrum of reading, especially in academic text. Therefore, further study of the meaning of these words may be beneficial. The words on this list can be incorporated into subsequent lessons.

Wilson Reading System Vocabulary Level: AB

injure (v) to do physical harm or damage to; hurt

maintain (v) to declare in a positive way; assert

survive (v) to continue to live after or in spite of

Words for Quick Discussion: Consider discussing these words as they are encountered to help students comprehend the passage. A quick discussion in student-friendly language while reading the text is best.

Wilson Reading System Vocabulary Level: B

evacuate (v) to remove (inhabitants, etc.) from (a place or area), as for protective purposes

mare (n) a fully mature female horse, mule, donkey, burro, etc.; specif., a female horse that has reached the age of five

mustang (n) a small, wild horse that lives on the plains of North America

rehabilitate (v) to bring or restore to a normal or optimal state of health, constructive activity, etc. by medical treatment and physical or psychological therapy

trough (n) a long, narrow, open container of wood, stone, etc. for holding water or food for animals

***Definition Source:** Collins English Dictionary. Retrieved from <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/us/dictionary/english>*

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