

## Initial Steps Towards Nutria Eradication in Virginia

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The nutria (*Myocastor coypus*), or coypu, is an exotic nuisance species in Virginia and North Carolina. This species is known to cause widespread damage to important coastal marsh systems through feeding and excavating activities. In 2011, the Mid-Atlantic Panel on Aquatic Invasive Species (MAPAIS) funded a collaborative project in Virginia to examine the expanding nutria population and to initiate the process of developing and implementing an eradication strategy. During that process, we engaged a group representing various agency, organization, and public stakeholders from Virginia, North Carolina, and Maryland. This group compiled information on current nutria distribution, coordinated public outreach messages on nutria and their associated threats, and established some preliminary management activities aimed at stopping the expansion of nutria in Virginia. The project has yielded, a contemporary distribution map of Nutria in VA and parts of NC, a delineation of preliminary management zones in VA, and a steering committee charged with coordinating and prioritizing future response to nutria. This group is now moving forward cooperatively to identify strategies for eradication in the region.

