



WILD Kids



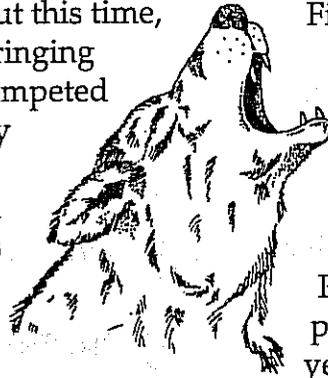
Helping Wolves and Humans Co-exist

The Mexican gray wolf or "lobo" is one of the rarest animals in North America. It is a subspecies of the gray wolf *Canus lupus* and its scientific name is *Canus lupus baileyi*. An adult Mexican wolf weighs 60 – 80 pounds and is about 5 ½ feet long, including the tail. Mexican wolves are predators mainly of large hoofed

animals such as elk, mule deer and white-tailed deer. By working as a group, or pack, wolves can bring down prey much larger than themselves. In a pack, there is an adult male and female called the "alpha pair." Usually, only the alpha pair breed, producing an average litter of five pups in April or May.

The History of Wolves in the Southwest

Up until the early 1900's, Mexican wolves were common throughout Arizona. About this time, settlers arrived in the southwest, bringing livestock with them. The settlers competed with wolves for the same large prey animals (elk and deer). Due to the reduced numbers of wild prey, and the availability of livestock, wolves sometimes killed cattle and sheep. As a result of this, settlers viewed wolves as a threat to their personal and economic well being. To eliminate wolves, private individuals and government agents hunted and trapped wolves. By the mid-1900's, there were no wolves remaining in the southwest, and populations in Mexico were greatly reduced.



In 1976, the Mexican wolf was listed as an endangered species under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). An endangered species is a species or subspecies in danger of becoming extinct throughout all or most of its range. Between 1977 and 1985, seven Mexican wolves were captured in Mexico and brought to the U.S. to establish a captive breeding program. More than 200 Mexican wolves have been born as a result of this program.

The Reintroduction Plan

The Endangered Species Act requires the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to design a plan for conservation of the Mexican wolf. The government of Mexico also supports this goal.

In 1997, the USFWS and Mexico approved a Mexican Wolf Reintroduction Plan. The goal of the plan is to release 15 pairs or family groups of wolves, over a five year period, into the Blue Range Wolf Recovery Area. (See map on other side.) This area was chosen because it is part of the Mexican wolf's historic range and supports a variety of wild prey such as elk and deer.

The reintroduction plan recommends that the wolves be held in pens for a few months before release. This is called a "soft release." It allows the wolves to become familiar with the area. All of the released wolves will wear a radio collar so their movements can be studied. The USFWS estimates that it will take about 9 years to establish a self-sustaining population of 100 wolves in the recovery area.

Critics of the Wolf Reintroduction Plan state that wolves would greatly reduce the number of

elk and other wild game and that wolves would wander out of the release area or prey on livestock. Ranchers question whether they would be able to kill a wolf that is preying on his/her livestock. There are also questions as to who will pay for livestock losses.

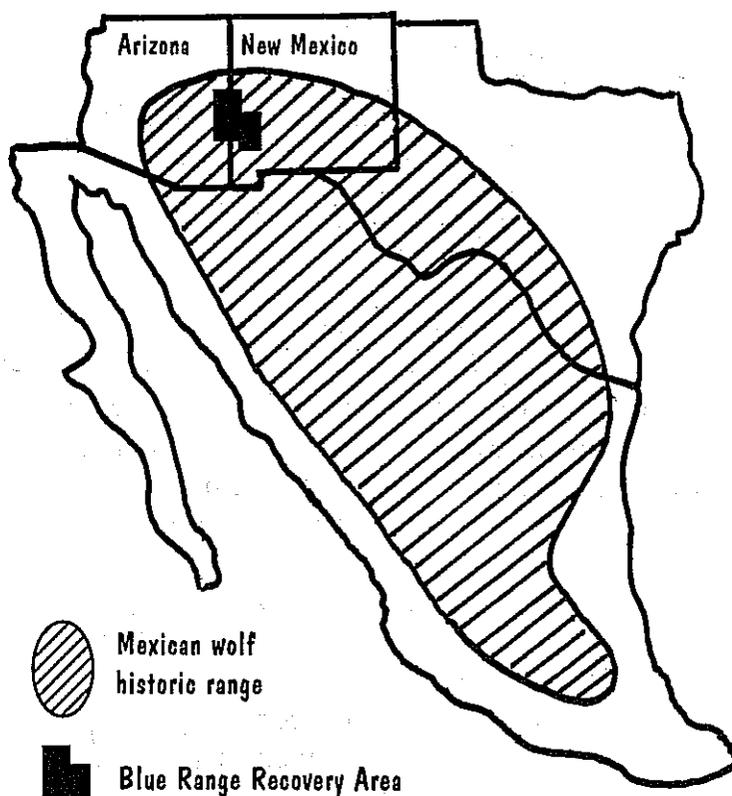
Although the federal and state government do not pay individuals for wildlife depredation (loss of livestock to predators), a conservation group, Defenders of Wildlife, will pay ranchers for livestock losses. However, it must be proven that a wolf caused the loss.

The Arizona Game and Fish Department has chosen to be an active participant in the Mexican Wolf Reintroduction plan, to do everything it can to ensure the success of the reintroduction plan and minimize negative effects to local residents. The Arizona Game and Fish Department will also be intensively involved in monitoring the activities of the released wolves. Other cooperating organizations include The U.S. Forest Service, New Mexico Department of Game and Fish, and USDA Wildlife Services.

The Mexican wolves reintroduced into the Blue Range Recovery Area are listed as a "nonessential experimental population" under the Endangered Species Act. This is a special condition which allows wildlife managers to capture and relocate wolves. It also defines

when a citizen can legally harass or kill a wolf. The wolves will not be allowed to establish territories outside the recovery area unless it occurs on private or tribal land and the land owner agrees. Wolves that wander away from the recovery area will be recaptured and returned, or placed in captivity.

Historic Range and Planned Reintroduction site



Mexican Wolf Research

You have read about the approved Wolf Reintroduction Plan and the Arizona Game & Fish Department's role in the reintroduction of the Mexican gray wolf. To find out more information about the Wolf Reintroduction Plan, we have provided a list of organizations that may have information available. Some groups or individuals may support wolf reintroduction in Arizona, others may not. Contact some of the organizations listed, and ask for information on the reintroduction of Mexican wolves. Also, interview your family, friends, and neighbors. Ask them what they know about the reintroduction of Mexican wolves in Arizona. Do

they support reintroduction? Why or why not? Write down your findings in a report and send it to: Arizona Game and Fish Department, Project WILD, 2221 W. Greenway Rd., Phoenix, AZ 85023.

USFWS
Southwest Regional Office
Division of Ecological Services
P.O. Box 1306
Albuquerque, NM 87103
<http://sturgeon.irm1.r2.fws.gov>

Arizona Cattle Association
Att: Lena McCoy
1401 N. 24th St.
Phoenix, AZ 85008

Preserve Arizona's Wolves
1413 East Dobbins Rd.
Phoenix, AZ 85040

Defenders of Wildlife
1101 - 14th N.W., Suite 1400
Washington, D.C. 20005

Springerville Chamber of Commerce
P. O. Box 32
Springerville, AZ 85938