



Mexican Wolf Reintroduction Project Monthly Update

January 1-31, 2015

The following is a summary of Mexican Wolf Reintroduction Project (Project) activities in the Mexican Wolf Experimental Population Area (MWEPA) in Arizona, including the Fort Apache Indian Reservation (FAIR), and New Mexico. Additional Project information can be obtained by calling (928) 339-4329 or toll free at (888) 459-9653, or by visiting the Arizona Game and Fish Department website at <http://www.azgfd.gov/wolf> or by visiting the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service website at <http://www.fws.gov/southwest/es/mexicanwolf>. Past updates may be viewed on either website, or interested parties may sign up to receive this update electronically by visiting <http://www.azgfd.gov/signup>. This update is a public document and information in it can be used for any purpose. The Reintroduction Project is a multi-agency cooperative effort among the Arizona Game and Fish Department (AGFD), USDA Forest Service (USFS), USDA-Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Wildlife Services (USDA-APHIS WS), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the White Mountain Apache Tribe (WMAT).

To view weekly wolf telemetry flight location information or the 3-month wolf distribution map, please visit <http://www.azgfd.gov/wolf>. On the home page, go to the “Wolf Location Information” heading on the right side of the page near the top and scroll to the specific location information you seek.

Please report any wolf sightings or suspected livestock depredations to: (928) 339-4329 or toll free at (888) 459-9653. To report incidents of take or harassment of wolves, please call the AGFD 24-hour dispatch (Operation Game Thief) at (800) 352-0700.

Numbering System: Mexican wolves are given an identification number recorded in an official studbook that tracks their history. Capital letters (M = Male, F = Female) preceding the number indicate adult animals 24 months or older. Lower case letters (m = male, f = female) indicate wolves younger than 24 months or pups. The capital letter “A” preceding the letter and number indicate breeding wolves.

Definitions: A “wolf pack” is defined as two or more wolves that maintain an established territory. In the event that one of the two alpha (dominant) wolves dies, the remaining alpha wolf, regardless of pack size, retains the pack status. The packs referenced in this update contain at least one wolf with a radio telemetry collar attached to it. The Interagency Field Team (IFT) recognizes that wolves without radio telemetry collars may also form packs. If the IFT confirms

that wolves are associating with each other and are resident within the same home range, they will be referenced as a pack.

CURRENT POPULATION STATUS

The IFT continued efforts to document the overall wolf population this month with track counts and visual observations being obtained on known packs. Food caches and camera traps were also being deployed in an effort to document the uncollared portion of the population.

Project personnel completed the Arizona portion of the end-of-year population count on January 23. The New Mexico portion of this count began on February 1 and the combined results of the Mexican wolf minimum population estimate for 2014 will be available in February. As a result of survey and capture efforts associated with the end-of-year population count, the collared population at the end of January 2015 consisted of 55 wolves with functional radio collars dispersed among 19 packs and 7 single wolves.

Note: In accordance with Standard Operating Procedure 27.0, the end-of-the-year population count is a minimum count with no range of numbers or associated statistical confidence intervals. The count includes three components:

1. All current radio-collared wolves and their pack associates being monitored as of December 31 of each year;
2. Radio-collared wolves whose collars are not functioning, but for which evidence exists indicating they were likely to have been on December 31, as determined by the IFT;
3. Uncollared wolves confirmed by IFT personnel anytime during November, December and January.

On January 18, the IFT captured M1342, a single wolf who has been traveling with the Elk Horn Pack, it was captured, re-collared and released back into the Elk Horn Pack territory.

On January 18, the IFT captured mp1382, from the Bluestem Pack re-collared and released it back into the Bluestem Pack territory.

On January 18, the IFT captured a single wolf, designated m1394, who was traveling with f1339 of the Bluestem Pack. Wolf m1394 was processed, collared and released near f1339 in Arizona.

On January 19, the IFT captured and re-collared AF1280 of the Hawks Nest Pack. AF1280 was processed and released back into the pack territory.

On January 19, the IFT captured a single wolf, designated f1395, who was traveling near M1290 of the Hoodoo Pack. The wolf was processed, collared and released near M1290 in Arizona.

On January 20, the IFT captured AF1042 from the Bluestem Pack. This wolf was fitted with a new collar and released back into the pack territory.

On January 20, the IFT captured m1331 from the Bluestem Pack. The wolf m1331 was observed limping by members of the IFT in December. This wolf was taken to the project

veterinarian after it was captured in January for medical attention. The medical evaluation revealed the wolf had a broken rear foot. This wolf was subsequently released back into its packs territory.

On January 21, the IFT captured M1161 who was traveling with single f1332. This wolf was fitted with a new collar and released near f1332.

On January 21, the IFT captured and removed AF1305 who had dispersed from the Maverick Pack and was traveling with single wolf m1336 from the Maverick Pack. Wolf AF1305 will be temporarily held in captivity to prevent it from breeding with a sibling wolf, m1336.

IN ARIZONA:

Bluestem Pack (collared AF1042, AM1341, m1330, m1331, f1333, f1339, f1340 and mp1382)

In January, the Bluestem Pack continued to use their traditional territory in the central portion of the ASNF. The IFT documented twelve wolves in the Bluestem Pack in January. During the annual helicopter survey the IFT captured and re-collared AF1042 and m1331. Wolf m1331 had a broken foot and was taken to a vet for medical treatment. Wolf f1339 has been located separately from Bluestem from most of January. On January 19, an uncollared wolf was observed traveling with f1339 during the annual helicopter survey. The uncollared wolf was captured and collared and released near f1339. The newly collared wolf is now m1394 and is considered a single wolf.

Elk Horn Pack (collared AF1294 and M1342)

In January, AF1294 was located within its traditional territory in the northeast portion of the ASNF in Arizona. M1342 from the Maverick Pack has continued to travel with AF1294 throughout the month. On January 18, the IFT captured and re-collared M1342. The wolf was processed and released back into Elk Horn territory. On January 25, the IFT obtained pictures from a trail camera, of two uncollared pups associated with the Elk Horn Pack.

Hawks Nest Pack (collared AM1038, AF1280 and mp1383)

During January, the Hawks Nest Pack was located within their traditional territory in the north central portion of the ASNF. On January 19, the IFT captured and re-collared AF1280. AF1280 was processed and released back into the pack territory. There were 2 uncollared pups documented with Hawks Nest during the annual helicopter survey.

Hoodoo Pack (collared M1290 and f1395)

In January, M1290 was located south of its typical territory and was located in the area northwest of Noble Mountain in Arizona. During the annual helicopter survey the IFT observed an uncollared wolf traveling with M1290. The uncollared wolf was captured, collared and designated f1395. Wolf f1395 was then released near M1290.

Maverick Pack (collared AM1183, AF1291, and F1335)

During January, the Maverick Pack traveled within their traditional territory both on the FAIR and ASNF. During the annual helicopter survey the IFT observed 3 uncollared wolves traveling

with the Maverick Pack.

Rim Pack and Maverick Pack (collared AF1305 and m1336)

In January AF1305 and m1336 continued to travel together in the south-central portion of the ASNF throughout November. On January 21, the IFT captured and removed AF1305 temporarily to captivity to prevent breeding between the wolf and its sibling, m1336.

Single f1332 (Collared)

Wolf f1332 has remained in Arizona and has traveled the south central portion of the ASNF. During the annual helicopter survey f1332 was observed traveling with collared wolf; however the collar was not functioning. On January 21, The IFT captured the wolf with the non-functioning collar and determined the wolf was M1161 who has not been observed or documented since December of 2009. M1161 was re-collared and released near f1332.

Single M1161 (Collared)

On January 21, The IFT captured the wolf with the non-functioning collar and determined the wolf was M1161 who has not be observed or documented existing since December of 2009. M1161 was re-collared and released near f1332.

ON THE FAIR:

Tsay o Ah Pack (collared M1343 and AF1283)

During January, the Tsay o Ah Pack was located on the FAIR.

Tse ighan lige Pack (collared AM1249, fp1389 and f1388)

During January, the Tse ighan lige Pack was located on the FAIR.

IN NEW MEXICO:

Canyon Creek Pack (collared AM1252 and AF1246)

During January, AM1252 was not located. AF1246's collar stopped functioning and the wolves have not been located since January 25.

Coronado Pack (collared M1051 and mp1350)

Throughout January the IFT located M1051 in south-central portions of the Gila Wilderness. Wolf mp1350 has typically been located in the northern portion of the Gila Wilderness separate from AM1051.

Dark Canyon Pack (collared AM992, AF923, M1293 and mp1354)

Throughout January, the IFT located this pack within its traditional territory in the west-central portion of the GNF.

Fox Mountain Pack (collared AM1158, AF1212, and mp1384)

During January, the IFT documented the Fox Mountain Pack within their traditional territory in the northwest portion of the GNF. In January AF1212 was located dead. The incident is under investigation.

Iron Creek Pack (collared AM1240 and AF1278)

In January, the Iron Creek Pack continued to utilize their territory in the northern portion of the Gila Wilderness and the southern portion of the Gila National Forest.

Lava Pack (collared M1285 and F1295)

Throughout January, M1285 and F1295 have been located together traveling in the northwest portion of the Gila Wilderness.

Luna Pack (collared AM1155, AF1115, and m1337)

In January, AM1155, AF1115 of the Luna Pack remained in their traditional territory in the north-central portion of the GNF. Wolf m1337 continued to display dispersal behavior and was last located in early-January.

Mangas Pack (collared M1296)

In January, M1296 traveled between the northern portion of the GNF in New Mexico and the northeastern portion of the ASNF in Arizona.

Prieto Pack (collared AM1387, AF1251, mp1386, fp1392)

Throughout January, the Prieto Pack was located within their traditional territory in the north-central portion of the GNF. On January 25, a dead cow and a dead calf were investigated by Wildlife Services near Rainy Mesa. The cow was determined to have been killed by wolves; the depredation was assigned to members of the Prieto Pack. Wildlife Services determined the calf was a probable wolf kill.

San Mateo Pack (collared AF903 and m1345)

During January the IFT located AF903 traveling with m1345 within the traditional territory of the San Mateo Pack.

Willow Springs Pack (collared AM1185, AF1279, m1338, mp1385, fp1390, and mp1391)

Throughout January, the IFT has located the Willow Springs Pack in their traditional territory in the north central portion of the GNF. Wolf mp1391 was not located in January and m1338 continued to display dispersal behavior; roaming throughout the GNF and into Arizona.

M1282 (collared)

M1282 wasn't located during January and is now considered fate unknown.

M1284 (collared)

Throughout January, M1284 was located traveling the northern-central portion of the GNF.

MORTALITIES

In January AF1126 was located dead in New Mexico. The incident is under investigation.

In January AF1212 was located dead in New Mexico. The incident is under investigation.

INCIDENTS

During January there were three livestock depredation reports and no nuisance reports in the BRWRA.

On January 25, Wildlife Services investigated one dead cow in New Mexico near Rainy Mesa. The investigation determined the cow was killed by wolves.

On January 25, Wildlife Services investigated one dead calf in New Mexico near Rainy Mesa. The investigation determined the calf was a “probable” wolf kill.

On January 28, Wildlife Services investigated a dead bull in Raspberry Basin in Arizona. The bull died of unknown causes.

COMMUNICATION AND COORDINATION

On January 9, a presentation was given to the New Mexico Society for Range Management at the Sevilleta National Wildlife Refuge headquarters. Approximately 25 people were in attendance.

On January 9, IFT personnel gave a presentation to the “Friends of the Forest” group at the Red Rock Ranger District Office in New Mexico. There were 70 people in attendance.

PROJECT PERSONNEL

No activity to report.

REWARDS OFFERED

The USFWS is offering a reward of up to \$10,000; the AGFD Operation Game Thief is offering a reward of up to \$1,000; and the NMDGF is offering a reward of up to \$1,000 for information leading to the conviction of the individual(s) responsible for the shooting deaths of Mexican wolves. A variety of non-governmental organizations and private individuals have pledged an additional \$46,000 for a total reward amount of up to \$58,000, depending on the information provided.

Individuals with information they believe may be helpful are urged to call one of the following agencies: USFWS special agents in Mesa, Arizona, at (480) 967-7900, in Alpine, Arizona, at (928) 339-4232, or in Albuquerque, New Mexico, at (505) 346-7828; the WMAT at (928) 338-1023 or (928) 338-4385; AGFD Operation Game Thief at (800) 352-0700; or NMDGF Operation Game Thief at (800) 432-4263. Killing a Mexican wolf is a violation of the Federal Endangered Species Act and can result in criminal penalties of up to \$50,000, and/or not more than one year in jail, and/or a civil penalty of up to \$25,000.

