

Mexican Wolf Blue Range Reintroduction Project Adaptive Management Oversight Committee Standard Operating Procedure

Title: Road Kill Salvage

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Purpose: The purpose of this SOP is to ensure efficient and safe collection of road-killed carcasses, without jeopardizing criminal investigations or causing unnecessary call-outs of wildlife managers. Furthermore, this SOP has been established to ensure that cervids potentially infected with Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) are not transported across state lines or uninfected areas within a state, or used as supplemental food for wolves. It supersedes relevant sections of the 1998 Mexican Wolf Interagency Management Plan (USFWS 1998), and therefore represents, in part, the “Service Approved Management Plan” referenced in the Mexican Wolf Final Rule (50 CFR 17.84(k)).

Exceptions: None. Per SOP 2.0, AMOC must approve any exceptions to this SOP.

Background: Collecting road-killed ungulates is necessary to accumulate a ready supply of native prey for wolves held in acclimation pens and for supplemental feeding of wolves immediately post-release. However, before road-killed elk and deer are collected, the carcass must be cleared of any suspected criminal poaching activity. Depending on the situation, some road-killed ungulates must be examined by a Wildlife Manager before they can be processed. Some road kills are reported at locations quite distant from the Alpine IFT Field Office, the USFWS New Mexico Ecological Services Field Office, or the Turner Endangered Species Fund Ladder Ranch office. Therefore, it is imperative that accurate location information be gathered to reduce chances of personnel going to the wrong location. It is also important to use a marked vehicle and to be in uniform to reduce the number of erroneous reports by the public of unauthorized people collecting the road-kill. These reports assume a possible poaching incident and require unnecessary callout of wildlife managers and involvement of other regional staff.

Note: Chronic Wasting Disease is a significant concern to wildlife management agencies and the public. Information on CWD and on prophylactic measures to ensure minimizing spread and impacts of CWD is evolving rapidly. All road kill salvage activities in this Project shall be conducted in a manner that does not contribute to spreading CWD, or exacerbating its impacts within an area of present occurrence. AGFD, NMDGF, and WMAT shall be consulted by the IFT as necessary to ensure compliance with appropriate CWD protocols. In addition, deer, elk, or other native ungulate carcasses salvaged for use as supplemental food for released or other wild Mexican wolves shall be used only in the County of origin (see also SOP 8.0, Supplemental Feeding). This applies to Arizona and to New Mexico; in other words, salvaged wildlife carcasses shall not be transported from one State to the other in this Project. The interstate transport ban was instituted after CWD was documented in mule deer in New Mexico, to ensure the Project does not contribute to spread of CWD.

Procedures:

1. The Project has authorization from both the states of Arizona and New Mexico to collect road-killed carcasses, although each state has different conditions of authorization. To obtain clearance to pick up carcasses, the following procedures must be followed:
 - a. Arizona on non-tribal lands:
 - i. Project personnel may obtain clearance to pick up the road kill from the appropriate AGFD Wildlife Manager by calling them on the phone or radio. Leave a message on an answering machine if the Wildlife Manager is unavailable. Do not assume the person who reported the carcass to the Project cleared it with a Wildlife Manager.
 - ii. Contact information for AGFD Wildlife Managers in the Project area:
 - (1) Chris Bagnoli or Mike Sumner, Game Management Unit 1.
 - (2) Aaron Hartzell or Steve Najar, Game Management Unit 27.
 - iii. If the appropriate AGFD Wildlife Manager cannot be reached, contact the AGFD 24-hour Radio Dispatch at (800) 352-0700.
 - b. In Arizona on White Mountain Apache Tribal lands, call WMAT Radio Dispatch at (928) 338-1023 or 338-4385.
 - c. Project personnel should collect brainstem (obex) samples (see Appendix A) from any road-killed ungulate acquired in Arizona within 48 hours of the animals' death. This time frame may be extended in cold climates, but collection of the obex should occur only if the brainstem is firm and intact. Immediately place the sample into formaldehyde solution, package it (see Appendix A), and give it to AGFD Region 1, as soon as possible for CWD testing.
 - d. In New Mexico:
 - i. Project personnel may salvage road-killed javelina, mule deer, white-tailed deer, pronghorn, and elk in New Mexico, provided that accurate information pertaining to the location and date of salvage is attached to each white-tailed deer and javelina salvaged; and that NMDGF is notified [(505) 476-8040 or (505) 476-8035] within one day regarding any salvage of white-tailed deer or javelina, prior to disposing of these specimens.
 - ii. Project personnel are required to immediately report any possession of cervids (mule deer, white-tailed deer and elk) in New Mexico to NMDGF at (505) 476-8080. If the death of any cervid acquired is known to have occurred within 48 hours, Project personnel are required to give the carcass head, or minimally the obex, to a NMDGF Conservation Officer as soon as possible for CWD testing.
 - iii. To contain and prevent spread of CWD in New Mexico, ungulate carcasses must remain in the County of origin, unless NMDGF authorizes differently.
 - iv. NMDGF Conservation Officers in the Project area:
 - (1) Leon Redman, Sergeant (Silver City).
 - (2) Bobby Griego, New Mexico Law Enforcement (Reserve).
 - (3) Michael Larish, New Mexico Law Enforcement (Quemado).
 - (4) Brian Gleadle, NW Area Chief (Albuquerque).
 - (5) Michael Matthews, Acting Sergeant (Socorro area).
 - (6) Ray Aaltonen, Sergeant (Las Cruces).
 - (7) If the appropriate NMDGF Conservation Officer cannot be reached, contact the NMDGF Radio Dispatch at (505) 827-9376.

2. Get specific location information before departing:
 - a. Highway mile marker
 - b. Distance and direction to nearest town
 - c. Which side of the road (North/South, East/West)
 - d. Species and sex
3. Use only marked vehicles to salvage road kills to avoid being suspected of poaching and causing unnecessary call-outs of law enforcement officers.
4. Pack the correct equipment:
 - a. Sharp knife
 - b. Pulaski, ax, or meat saw
 - c. Brainstem sampling equipment
 - d. Heavy duty rubber gloves
 - e. Rope or tow strap
 - f. Electric or crank winch or a come-along
 - g. Flashlight or flood light
5. Always travel with the radio and/or cell phone on to be available to receive information or to communicate with the local wildlife manager or the Regional Offices.
6. When arriving at the site, make sure the truck is pulled off the roadway as much as possible. If it is not safe/feasible to park next to the road kill, proceed to the nearest safe location. If anything appears suspicious, record the license plates, a description of the person(s) and vehicle(s), and then leave the scene and immediately call a local Wildlife Manager (AZ), Conservation Officer (NM), the Regional Office, or Radio Dispatch with the information.
7. If the person who struck the animal wishes to keep it:
 - a. In Arizona, the person must obtain a salvage permit from any AGFD Wildlife Manager, Sheriff Deputy, or Department of Public Service Officer (Highway Patrol).
 - b. In New Mexico, the person must obtain a permit from a NMDGF Conservation Officer before moving the carcass.
 - c. Do not get into a confrontation over possession of a road kill.
8. Carefully inspect the area around the carcass to ensure there has been no contamination
9. Determine if the ungulate has injuries consistent with road kill. If a bullet wound or other suspicious evidence is found, do not move the animal – immediately call a Wildlife Manager (AZ) or Conservation Officer (NM). The Wildlife Manager or Conservation Officer might ask you to wait at the scene to preserve the evidence until a law enforcement officer arrives.
10. If it is unsafe or inconvenient to quarter the road kill on site, drag it to a better spot or winch it into the back of the pickup and transport it to a safe location.
11. To make the carcass easier to move and transport, remove the entrails and cut it into 5 to 7

parts, depending on its size. Smaller deer can be processed for transport by cutting off all legs, leaving the head on the torso as one piece. With larger elk, all four legs must be removed, the head separated from the chest, and the chest separated from the hips. Young elk calves and deer fawns can sometimes be handled whole.

12. Do not leave the entrails on the roadside in plain view of the public or where they might cause additional road kill of prey or wolves. Remove the entrails to a remote location.
13. Cover the ungulate parts or lay them as flat as possible in the pickup bed so they are not visible to the public.
14. To help prevent spread of CWD, do not transport any road-killed elk or deer across state lines.
15. Transport the road kill to the walk-in freezers at the AGFD Sipe Wildlife Area, USFWS Sevilleta National Wildlife Refuge, TESH Ladder Ranch, or deliver it directly to where it is needed by the IFT. Be sure to record the information about the road kill in the IFT log records next to the freezers. Deposit the road kill into the freezer according to the instructions in the log record.
16. When applicable (e.g. Sipe Wildlife Area Freezer), exchange the drain can hanging from the freezer unit for an empty one, to prevent overflow. Overflow will freeze the first layer of carcasses to the floor. Place the frozen drain can outside the building to thaw and drain.
17. Clean up any blood, hair, etc. around the freezer and on the freezer floor.
18. Make sure the freezer door is shut tight.
19. For road kills salvaged or otherwise noted in Arizona, submit a “Wildlife Vehicle Collision Report (Appendix B) to the AGFD Region 1 (Pinetop) Office.

Approvals:

The Mexican Wolf Blue Range Reintroduction Project Adaptive Management Oversight Committee approved this SOP on October 10, 2005.

References: None

Appendix A.

Collection of Obex Samples

There are two options for submission of the obex for diagnosis of CWD in cervids. The first and preferred method is brain stem removal via the foramen magnum, with submission of the obex in formalin. The second is to remove and submit the entire head to AGFD's Research Branch. If this second option is selected, AGFD's Research Branch must be contacted immediately so their personnel can pick-up the specimen directly (Research Branch, [602] 789-3246).

Before attempting to remove an obex from a specimen, all project personnel should be trained by a member of the full-time staff who has received formal training from AGFD's Research Branch. Once this has occurred, this protocol can be used as a guide to reiterate the proper steps for the removal of an obex sample.

Removal of the obex: This procedure is relatively easy in elk, but difficult in deer due to the smaller foramen magnum. The only tools needed are latex gloves, tissue forceps, a long thin sharp scalpel and a container with formalin solution. Gloves should be worn when performing the following procedures. First invert the head/neck so that the ventral side is facing upwards. Then using the posterior end of the mandibles as a starting point, make an inverted 'V-shaped' cut upward until the two incisions connect. Then cut downward through the esophagus and trachea until you can see the two, bolus knobs of the foramen magnum, located where the first cervical vertebrae and the base of the skull connect. This will expose the brainstem, which is off-white in color. You may need to push down on the head and neck to open the incision and fully expose this region. Take the scalpel and insert it through the foramen magnum on the lateral aspect of the brain stem and cut the cerebellar peduncles (where the brainstem forks) bilaterally being careful not to damage the obex region (immediately posterior to the cerebellar peduncles) of the brain. Reinsert the knife between the ventral aspects of the brain stem and floor of the skull as far as possible, at least to the pons region (anterior to where the brainstem forks). Make a turning cut with the knife to sever the brain stem at the level of the pons. With the tissue forceps pull the brain stem out. The obex is now placed in container of 10% buffered formalin solution.

The container is then labeled with the species, sex, and a geographical location of where the sample was collected, using a permanent marker. All samples will be delivered to the AGFD's Region I Office, Pinetop, Arizona.

Appendix B.

Arizona Game and Fish Department and Arizona Department of Transportation

Wildlife Vehicle Collision Report

(Not a Salvage Permit)

Collision Information:

Collision Date ____ / ____ / ____ Time _____ am/pm ____ Unknown
 Location: Road Name/Number _____ Nearest 1/10 Mile Post _____
 Latitude ____ / ____ / ____ Longitude ____ / ____ / ____ (degrees, minutes, seconds)
 or UTM _____ Datum: ____ Nad83, ____ Nad27, ____ Other _____
 Cross Roads or Landmark _____ County _____
 Direction of Travel: ____ Eastbound, ____ Westbound, ____ Southbound, ____ Northbound, ____ Unknown

Reporting Party Information:

Reporting Date _____ Time _____ am/pm
 Agency: AGFD ADOT DPS County Citizen Other _____ Officer ID Number: _____
 Name: _____ Telephone Number: _____

<p>Animal Description:</p> <p>Mule Deer Javelina Whitetail Deer Buffalo Elk Bear Antelope Mt. Lion Turkey Bighorn Sheep Other _____</p>	<p>Sex:</p> <p>Male Female Unknown</p> <p>Age:</p> <p>Adult Juvenile Unknown</p>	<p>Animal Disposition:</p> <p>Dead Salvage Permit # _____ Removed: By Who Marked Animal Left the Area Ear/Collar Tag # _____ Dispatched: By Who Investigated By</p>
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Multiple Animals: Report ____ of Total Reports ____ (one per animal)

Comments: _____ Form # 9084 9/04