



## Mexican Wolf Reintroduction Project Monthly Update

February 1-28, 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**

Project personnel completed the 2014 end-of-year population count on February 13. The specific minimum population estimate for 2014 is 109 Mexican Wolves in Arizona and New Mexico. As a result of survey and capture efforts associated with the end-of-year population count, the collared population at the end of February 2015 consisted of 61 wolves with functional radio collars dispersed among 18 packs and three 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 February 2, the IFT captured an uncollared wolf pup from the Fox Mountain Pack. The wolf was collared, designated mp1396 and released back into the Fox Mountain Pack territory.

On February 2, the IFT captured mp1384, from the Fox Mountain Pack. The wolf was re-collared and released back into the Fox Mountain Pack territory.

On February 2, the IFT captured a female wolf pup associated with the Willow Springs Pack. The wolf was collared designated fp1397 and released back into Willow Springs Pack territory.

On February 3, the IFT captured and collared mp1347 of the Dark Canyon Pack. The wolf pup was one of two pups cross-fostered into the Dark Canyon Pack in 2014. The wolf was processed and released back into the pack territory.

On February 3, the IFT captured a male wolf pup associated with the Luna Pack. The wolf was designated mp1398, processed, collared and released back into the Luna Pack territory.

On February 4, the IFT captured m1336 from the Maverick Pack. This wolf was removed to captivity to prevent the animal from breeding with its sibling and pair it with a genetically valuable female.

On February 4, the IFT captured AF1115 from the Luna Pack. The wolf was re-collared, processed and released back into the Luna Pack territory.

On February 5, the IFT captured M1285 from the Lava Pack. The wolf was fitted with a new

collar and released back into the Lava Pack territory.

On February 6, the IFT captured AM1158 from the Fox Mountain Pack. The wolf was processed, re-collared and released back into the Fox Mountain Pack territory.

On February 6, the IFT captured an uncollared female wolf pup from the San Mateo Pack. The pup designated fp1399, processed collared, and released back into San Mateo Pack territory.

On February 6, the IFT captured AF1251 from the Prieto Pack. The wolf was re-collared and released back into the Prieto Pack territory.

## **IN ARIZONA:**

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

In February, the Bluestem Pack continued to use their traditional territory in the central portion of the ASNF. Wolf f1339 continues to travel separate from the Pack with Single m1394 and has been located on the SCAR for most of February. In February the IFT observed f1340 separate from the Bluestem Pack and traveling with another collared wolf. The pair was observed south of Greens Peak in Arizona. Unfortunately the collar on the wolf traveling with f1340 is not functioning. The IFT has started the predation study for winter 2015 and has been investigating GPS clusters associated with the Bluestem Pack.

### **Elk Horn Pack (collared AF1294 and M1342)**

In February, AF1294 and M1342 were located within their traditional territory in the northeast portion of the ASNF in Arizona.

### **Hawks Nest Pack (collared AM1038, AF1280 and mp1383)**

In February, the Hawks Nest Pack was located within their traditional territory in the north central portion of the ASNF. For the 2015 winter predation study the IFT started investigating GPS clusters associated with the Hawks Nest Pack.

### **Hoodoo Pack (collared M1290 and f1395)**

In February, M1290 was located south of its traditional territory and was located in the area northwest of Noble Mountain and west of Nutrioso in Arizona.

### **Maverick Pack (collared AM1183, AF1291, m1336 and f1335)**

During February, the Maverick Pack traveled within their traditional territory both on the FAIR and ASNF. Wolf m1336 has been located separate from Maverick and was traveling with its sibling AF1305. Wolf m1336 was captured during the end-of-the-year helicopter operation and removed to captivity temporarily to prevent the wolf from breeding with its sibling and to facilitate pair-bonding with a genetically valuable captive female.

### **Single f1332 (Collared)**

In February f1332 was located dead in Arizona. The incident is under investigation.

**Single M1161 (Collared)**

In February M1161 was located traveling with f1332 in the east-central portion of the ASNF. After the death of f1332 this month, M1161 has been traveling back and forth between New Mexico and Arizona.

**Single m1394 (collared)**

In February, this wolf was located traveling with f1339 from the Bluestem Pack. Both wolves were located on the SCAR throughout February.

**ON THE FAIR:****Tsay o Ah Pack (collared M1343 and AF1283)**

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

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

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

**IN NEW MEXICO:****Canyon Creek Pack (collared AM1252 and AF1246)**

During February, AM1252 and AF1246's have not been located.

**Coronado Pack (collared AM1051)**

In February the IFT located AM1051 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 and is now considered a single wolf.

**Dark Canyon Pack (collared AM992, AF923, M1293, mp1354 and mp1347)**

Throughout February, the IFT located this pack within its traditional territory in the west-central portion of the GNF. During the helicopter operation the IFT captured and collared mp1347. Wolf mp1347 was one of two cross-fostered pups from the summer of 2014.

**Fox Mountain Pack (collared AM1158, mp1384 and mp1396)**

During February, the IFT documented the Fox Mountain Pack within their traditional territory in the northwest portion of the GNF. During the helicopter operation the IFT captured and re-collared AM1158 and an uncollared wolf pup. The wolf pup was designated mp1396 processed and released back into the Fox Mountain Pack territory.

**Iron Creek Pack (collared AM1240 and AF1278)**

In February, 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 February, M1285 and F1295 were located together traveling in the northwest portion of the Gila Wilderness. M1285 was captured during the helicopter operation and was re-collared and released back into the Lava Pack territory.

**Luna Pack (collared AM1155, AF1115, m1337 and mp1398)**

In February, AM1155, AF1115 of the Luna Pack remained in their traditional territory in the north-central portion of the GNF. During the helicopter operation the IFT captured AF1115 and an uncollared wolf pup. AF1115 was re-collared and released back into Luna Pack territory, and the uncollared pup was processed, designated mp1398 and released back into the Luna Pack territory. In February, the IFT began investigating location clusters associated with the Luna Pack for the winter 2015 predation study. Wolf m1337 has not been located during the month of February.

**Mangas Pack (collared M1296)**

In February, M1296 traveled within the northern portion of the GNF in New Mexico and east of the Gila National Forest boundary. Several times in February this wolf was located in close proximity to the San Mateo Pack.

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

Throughout February, the Prieto Pack was located within their traditional territory in the north-central portion of the GNF. During the end-of-the-year helicopter operation AF1251 was captured, re-collared and released back into the Prieto Packs territory.

**San Mateo Pack (collared AF903, M1345 and fp1399)**

During February, the IFT located AF903 traveling with M1345 within the traditional territory of the San Mateo Pack. During the end-of-the-year helicopter operation the IFT captured an uncollared pup associated with the San Mateo Pack. The wolf was designated fp1399 and released back into the San Mateo Pack territory.

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

Throughout February, the IFT located the Willow Springs Pack in their traditional territory in the north central portion of the GNF. Wolf mp1391 has not been located for three months and is now considered fate unknown.

**M1284 (collared)**

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

**M1338 (collared)**

Throughout February, M1338 was located traveling in the central portion of the ASNF. M1388 has been located separate from its pack for three months and is now considered a single wolf.

**mp1350 (collared)**

Throughout February, mp1350 has been located in the northern portion of the Gila Wilderness. mp1350 has been located separately from AM1051 for three months and is now considered a single wolf.

**MORTALITIES**

In February f1332 was located dead in Arizona. The incident is under investigation.

## **INCIDENTS**

During February there were 12 livestock depredation reports and one incident reported where a canine like animal bit a person in the recovery area.

On February 4, Wildlife Services investigated one dead cow on the Deadman allotment in New Mexico. The investigation determined the cow was killed by wolves.

On February 4, an incident was investigated by the USFWS and Wildlife Services that involved a member of the public reportedly being bit by a canine like animal on the Deadman allotment in New Mexico. The incident is still under investigation.

On February 10, Wildlife Services investigated a dead cow near Canyon Del Buey in New Mexico. The investigation determined the cow was killed by a wolf.

On February 12, Wildlife Services investigated a dead cow near the Cow Springs Ranch in New Mexico. The investigation determined the cow had been killed a wolf.

On February 14, Wildlife Services investigated a dead cow near the Maynard Ranch in New Mexico. The investigation confirmed the cow had been killed by wolves.

On February 17, Wildlife Services investigated a dead cow/calf pair near Spur Lake Basin in New Mexico. The investigation concluded the cow/calf pair died of unknown causes.

On February 18, Wildlife Services investigated an injured dog near Aragon New Mexico. The investigation determined the dog had been attacked by wolves.

On February 23, Wildlife Services investigated a dead calf near Stray Horse in Arizona. The investigation determined the calf probably died due to the cow stepping on the calf while trying to protect it from coyotes.

On February 26, Wildlife Services investigated a dead calf near Spur Lake Basin in New Mexico. The investigation confirmed the calf had been killed by a wolf.

On February 28, Wildlife Services investigated a dead calf near Spur Lake Basin in New Mexico. The investigation confirmed the calf had been killed by a wolf.

On February 28, Wildlife Services investigated a dead calf near Spur Lake Basin in New Mexico. The investigation confirmed the calf had been killed by wolves.

On February 28, Wildlife Services investigated a dead cow and calf near Spur Lake Basin in New Mexico. The investigation determined the cow and calf had probably been killed by wolves.

On February 28, Wildlife Services investigated a dead yearling heifer near Eagle Peak in New Mexico. The investigation confirmed the heifer had been killed by wolves.

### **COMMUNICATION AND COORDINATION**

On February 19, the Middle Mangement Team Executives met in Phoenix.

On February 20, the Middle Mangement Team met in Phoenix.

### **PROJECT PERSONNEL**

Dan Tomasetti, a volunteer for the USFWS, completed his internship at the end of February. Thanks Dan, for all your hard work!

### **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.