



Arizona Game and Fish Department

NEWS RELEASE

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Arizona Game and Fish Commission amends Mexican wolf release policy to consider population losses

PHOENIX -- During a routine update on the Game and Fish Department's nongame program activities, the Arizona Game and Fish Commission – during its regularly scheduled monthly public meeting – voted unanimously to amend its policy on the release of Mexican wolves in eastern Arizona.

The commission recognized that the death or removal of individual wolves from the reintroduced population needed to be addressed for the short-term while the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service continues to work on the completion of several planning measures that are considered by the commission to be critical to the program.

Today's amendment will consider the replacement of lost wolves on a case-by-case basis. Game and Fish's director will now have the authority to approve a wolf release in cases where an animal is lost from the population due to an unlawful act. When a wolf is lost to any other cause of mortality, the commission must approve a release.

The previous policy to oppose any new release of wolves was adopted at the commission's December 2011 meeting. Today's action amends that guidance.

The commission again reaffirmed both its financial and infrastructure support of Mexican wolf conservation.

The last initial release of wolves took place in 2008. Since the wolf reintroduction began in 1998, 19 initial releases have taken place with Game and Fish's support. All initial releases of wolves for this Arizona-New Mexico population have taken place in Arizona.

The Mexican wolf reintroduction program has been operating on a recovery plan from 1982. Planning measures that are considered critical for guiding the program include: an updated Mexican wolf recovery plan, review of the 10(j) experimental-nonessential population rule for Mexican wolf, and an environmental impact statement.

To learn about the Arizona Game and Fish Department's role in the Mexican gray wolf reintroduction, visit www.azgfd.gov/wolf.

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