



## **Contact**

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## **Arizona Game and Fish Department**

### **NEWS RELEASE**

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#### **Mexican wolf relocated to White Mountains**

PINETOP, Ariz. – A Mexican wolf was relocated this month to the White Mountains area of eastern Arizona as part of an ongoing effort to restore the species to its once native territory in the state. The 2 1/2-year-old male was transferred from New Mexico to the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests, south of Big Lake in Arizona.

The Mexican Wolf Reintroduction Project hopes the unrelated male will pair with the dominant female of the local Bluestem pack that is currently without a dominant male. If successful, the two wolves will become a new, reproductive pair, and the pack will produce pups next year, as the previous pair did in 2006.

Terry B. Johnson, endangered species coordinator for the Arizona Game and Fish Department, explains, "Moving this wolf to an area where it will be more likely to find a mate increases the chances for it to contribute to next year's breeding success."

The project's field team captured the male wolf in March 2006 from private land in New Mexico and temporarily held it at a secure wolf facility until a suitable release site became available. The wolf had been previously associated with two livestock depredation incidents in New Mexico. The new release site was chosen based on the reduced chance of livestock encounters and the presence of an unmated adult female wolf. The male wolf, along with the entire pack, will continue to be monitored for future depredation.

The Mexican wolf was eliminated from the wild in the United States decades ago, but in 1998, the Arizona Game and Fish Department joined other agencies in an ongoing effort to reintroduce it to parts of Arizona and New Mexico.

In the first year, 11 wolves were released into the Blue Range Wolf Recovery Area in eastern Arizona, with additional releases occurring in the years following. Management activities have included public opinion surveys, public outreach and education, release site feasibility studies, population monitoring, responses to depredation incidents and other problem situations, intensive coordination among cooperating agencies, and adaptive management with the public.

The reintroduction of the Mexican wolf is a cooperative, multi-agency effort of the Arizona Game and Fish Department, New Mexico Department of Game and Fish, White Mountain Apache Tribe, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, USDA Forest Service, and USDA-APHIS Wildlife Services.