



Mexican Wolf Blue Range Reintroduction Project Monthly Update

January 1-31, 2012

The following is a summary of Mexican Wolf Reintroduction Project (Project) activities in Arizona on the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests (ASNF) and Fort Apache Indian Reservation (FAIR) and in New Mexico on the Apache National Forest (ANF) and Gila National Forest (GNF). Non-tribal lands involved in this Project are collectively known as the Blue Range Wolf Recovery Area (BRWRA). 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 alpha 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 2011 end-of-year population count on January 28. The specific minimum population estimate for 2011 is 58 wolves with seven breeding pairs. The definition of a breeding pair as set forth in the 1998 10(j) Final Rule is "an adult male and an adult female wolf that have produced at least two pups during the previous breeding season that survived until December 31 of the year of their birth." One of the documented breeding pairs, the Hawks Nest Pack, incurred the loss and replacement of an alpha animal (AF1110), and including them in the official breeding pair count may be a departure from the definition in the Final Rule. This issue will be clarified in the 2011 final Annual Report that is scheduled to be completed this spring. The collared population at the end of January 2012 consisted of 33 wolves with functional radio collars dispersed among 13 packs and three single wolves.

On January 26, the IFT captured Rim Pack AM1107 on the SCAR. They replaced the wolf's telemetry collar, and released it back onto the SCAR the same day. The IFT had planned to remove AM1107 from the SCAR and release it onto the BRWRA in Arizona within its territory; however, due to the circumstances surrounding the area where the wolf was captured, they decided to release it at the capture site to ensure the safety of the crew and helicopter. The next day, the IFT located this wolf traveling with AF858 on the BRWRA within the pack territory.

IN ARIZONA:

Bluestem Pack (collared AM806, AF1042 and mp1240)

Throughout January, the IFT located these wolves in their traditional territory in the central portion of the ASNF. The radio telemetry collar for AM806 only worked intermittently during January.

Hawks Nest Pack (collared f1208, mp1244 and fp1247)

In January, these wolves continued to use their traditional territory in the north-central portion of the ASNF. The IFT observed M1038 traveling with this pack during January; however, the signal from this wolf's radio telemetry collar continues to be very weak and not practical for ground or aerial telemetry locations.

Rim Pack (collared AM1107 and AF858)

Throughout January, the IFT located the Rim Pack utilizing its winter range in the south-central portion of the ASNF.

Paradise Pack (collared AM795, AF1056, mp1243 and mp1245)

In January, these wolves continued to utilize the traditional winter range of their territory in the northern portion of the ASNF.

m1252 (collared)

Throughout January, the IFT located this wolf traveling widely throughout the BRWRA in Arizona.

ON THE FAIR:

Maverick Pack (collared M1183)

During the January helicopter count, the IFT located this wolf traveling with other wolves on the FAIR.

Tsay o Ah Pack (collared M1253)

During the helicopter count, the IFT located this wolf also traveling with other wolves on the FAIR.

IN NEW MEXICO:

Dark Canyon (collared AM992, AF923, fp1250 and fp1251)

Throughout January, the IFT located the Dark Canyon Pack within its traditional territory in the west-central portion of the GNF.

Fox Mountain Pack (collared M1158 and F1188)

Throughout January, the IFT documented these wolves together in the northwest portion of the GNF.

Luna Pack (collared AF1115, F1246 and mp1241)

In January, the IFT located the Luna Pack within its traditional territory in the north-central portion of the GNF. The IFT located M1155 traveling with AF1115 this month. Two of the wolves from this pack were located traveling away from AF1115 in January. F1246 was located traveling with m1248 in the north-central portion of the GNF, while mp1241 was located traveling alone just outside of the Luna Pack territory.

Middle Fork Pack (collared AM871 and AF861)

In January, the IFT located AM871 and AF861 within their traditional territory in the central portion of the GNF.

Morgart's Pack (collared M1155)

Throughout January, the IFT documented this wolf traveling with AF1115 in the north-central portion of the GNF, largely within the Luna Pack territory.

San Mateo Pack (collared AM1157, AF903 and m1249)

During January, the IFT located these wolves in the traditional San Mateo Pack territory in the north-central portion of the GNF. The IFT also continued to document f1212 traveling widely throughout the BRWRA in New Mexico and Arizona. The IFT does not consider f1212 to be a part of this pack. The IFT also documented f1212 traveling with an uncollared wolf during the helicopter count.

Willow Springs Pack (collared M1185)

Throughout January, the IFT located this wolf in the north-central portion of the GNF. The IFT documented M1185 traveling with an uncollared wolf

m1248 (collared)

Throughout January, the IFT located this wolf traveling widely throughout the BRWRA in New Mexico. This wolf was documented traveling with F1246 during the helicopter count.

f1212 (collared)

During January, the IFT located this wolf traveling widely throughout the BRWRA in New Mexico and Arizona. The IFT documented f1212 traveling with an uncollared wolf during the helicopter count.

MORTALITIES

No wolf mortalities were documented during the month of January.

INCIDENTS

During January, IFT personnel investigated two livestock depredation incidents in the BRWRA.

On January 4, WS personnel investigated a dead calf near Collins Park, New Mexico, on the GNF. They confirmed the incident as a wolf depredation, and the incident was assigned to mp1241 of the Luna Pack.

On January 12, WS personnel investigated a dead cow in the vicinity of Wahoo Peak on the GNF. The investigation revealed that the cow died of unknown causes.

CAPTIVE MANAGEMENT

On January 4, Project personnel at the Sevilleta Wolf Management Facility captured, vaccinated and separated males and females in advance of the wolf breeding season. Animals captured included M968, F1064, m1200, m1201, f1202, f1203, f1204, m1215, f1216, f1217, f1218, f1219, M1130, M1133, and F1108.

COMMUNICATION AND COORDINATION

In January, Project personnel continued with landowner contacts regarding specific wolf locations in relation to livestock calving operations in Arizona and New Mexico.

PROJECT PERSONNEL

No significant activity occurred this month.

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.