



Mexican Wolf Blue Range Reintroduction Project Monthly Update

January 1-31, 2013

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 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 2012 end-of-year population count on February 1. The specific minimum population estimate for 2012 is 75 wolves with four breeding pairs. A breeding pair consists of at least one adult male (including an alpha male), at least one adult female (including an alpha female), and at least two pups produced during the same year that survive until the end of December. As a result of survey and capture efforts associated with the end-of-year population count, the collared population at the end of January 2013 consisted of 46 wolves with functional radio collars dispersed among fourteen packs and four 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 January 21, the IFT captured a previously uncollared female pup, fp1289, from the Bluestem Pack in the vicinity of Juniper Bench on the ASNF. The wolf was fitted with a telemetry collar and released back into the Bluestem territory on the same day.

On January 21, the IFT captured and removed AF858 from the Rim Pack in accordance with a removal order issued by the FWS in mid-January. The Middle Management Team for the Project met in December 2012 and approved the management action. AF858 has not produced pups in the wild since 2010, likely due to its advanced age. Due to its genetic profile and age, the FWS and IFT determined this wolf would be more valuable to the captive breeding program than in the wild population. Veterinarians obtained unfertilized eggs from this wolf after it was captured, and it is recovering well after the surgery. The eggs may be used with future assisted-reproductive technologies to produce pups that have a favorable genetic profile to the overall Mexican wolf population. The IFT is planning to conduct a replacement release of two pair-bonded wolves into the Rim Pack territory during the spring of 2013.

On January 22, the IFT captured and collared two previously uncollared pups, mp1290 and fp1291, from the Maverick Pack in the vicinity of Black River on the ASNF. The IFT released both wolves back into their pack territories on the same day of capture. The IFT also recaptured AM1253 from the Tsay o Ah Pack on the FAIR. This wolf was fitted with a new telemetry collar and released the same day.

On January 23, the IFT captured and collared a previously uncollared female pup, fp1292, from

the San Mateo Pack near Mangas Mountain on the GNF. This wolf was fitted with a telemetry collar and released back into the pack territory.

On January 24, the IFT captured and collared a previously uncollared yearling male, m1293, from the Dark Canyon Pack near Bearwallow Mountain on the GNF. This wolf was fitted with a telemetry collar and released back into the pack territory. The IFT also recaptured M1185 from the Willow Springs Pack near John Kerr Peak on the GNF. This wolf was fitted with a new telemetry collar and released the same day into the Willow Springs Pack territory.

On January 25, the IFT captured and collared a previously uncollared yearling female, f1294, from the Elk Horn Pack in the vicinity of Escudilla Mountain on the ASNF. The wolf was released the same day near Escudilla.

On January 25, the IFT recaptured Paradise Pack AF1056 in the vicinity of Whiting Knoll on the ASNF. They replaced the wolf's telemetry collar and released it the same day. The IFT recaptured Bluestem Pack AF1042 near Three Forks on the ASNF, replaced its telemetry collar, and released it near Three Forks. The IFT also recaptured AM1158 from the Fox Mountain Pack near ELC Flat on the ASNF. The wolf was fitted with a new telemetry collar and released in the same vicinity where it was captured on the ASNF.

On January 29, the IFT captured M1133 on private land near Reserve, New Mexico. This wolf was initially released in Arizona on January 8 adjacent to the Bluestem Pack to potentially provide a breeding male for AF1042 whose mate had been illegally killed. After spending several days adjacent to the Bluestem Pack, M1133 moved into an area of New Mexico where it was unlikely to encounter other wolves. The FWS and IFT determined that recapture of M1133 was in the best interest of overall reintroduction project goals. This wolf was transferred to the Sevilleta Wolf Management facility and is being evaluated for captive breeding and translocation into the BRWRA in the future.

On January 31, the IFT recaptured F1246 from the Canyon Creek Pack near the Canyon Creek Mountains on the GNF. The wolf was fitted with a new telemetry collar and released the same day in the vicinity where it was captured.

On February 1, the IFT recaptured AF1115 from the Luna Pack near Pinon Knob on the GNF. The wolf was fitted with a new telemetry collar and released the same day in the vicinity where it was captured.

IN ARIZONA:

Bluestem Pack (collared AF1042, m1240, mp1275, mp1277, fp1280 and fp1289)

Throughout January, the IFT located these wolves in their traditional territory in the central portion of the ASNF. The IFT documented wolf m1240 traveling outside of this pack's traditional territory this month.

Hawks Nest Pack (collared m1244)

In January, the IFT located this wolf traveling widely through the BRWRA in Arizona and New

Mexico. The IFT was able to confirm that AM1038 was still alive in the traditional Hawks Nest territory in the north-central portion of the ASNF; however, it has a nonfunctioning radio collar, making this wolf impossible to track with telemetry equipment. The IFT now considers m1244 to be a single wolf.

Paradise Pack (collared AM795 and AF1056)

In January, the IFT located AM795 and AF1056 using their traditional winter territory on the northern portion of the ASNF. The yearling wolves for this pack, m1243 and m1245, have dispersed and have been located traveling widely through the BRWRA. The IFT now considers these two yearling males to be single wolves.

Rim Pack (collared AM1107)

Throughout January, the IFT located the Rim Pack utilizing the south-central portion of the ASNF. The IFT captured and removed AF858 from this pack in January; however, AM1107 will retain the Rim Pack name, and the IFT will continue to monitor its movements.

Maverick Pack (collared AM1183, mp1290 and fp1291)

During early January, the IFT located AM1183 on the SCAR. Later in January, the IFT located these wolves on the west-central portion of the ASNF.

ON THE FAIR:

Tsay o Ah Pack (collared AM1253, m1254 and fp1283)

During January, the IFT located these wolves on the FAIR.

IN NEW MEXICO:

Canyon Creek Pack (collared M1252 and F1246)

In January, the IFT located these wolves traveling together in the central portion of the GNF. M1252 has been located with F1246 since November, and the IFT now considers this wolf to be part of the Canyon Creek Pack. The IFT has not been able to locate AM1248 since October 15, and now considers this wolf to be fate unknown.

Dark Canyon Pack (collared AM992, AF923, m1293 and fp1278)

Throughout January, the IFT located this pack within its traditional territory in the west-central portion of the GNF. In late December, the IFT documented f1251 traveling in the central portion of the GNF, away from the other wolves in this pack. During the end-of-year count, the IFT documented an uncollared wolf traveling with f1251 in the north-central portion of the GNF. The IFT now considers this wolf to be a dispersing female, separate from the Dark Canyon Pack.

Elk Horn Pack (collared AM1287 and f1294)

In January, the IFT located AM1287 and AF1212 traveling separately in the BRWRA. AF1212 has been traveling with AM1158 and M1276 of the Fox Mountain Pack in the northwest portion of the GNF. AM1287 was documented traveling through the central and east-central portion of the ASNF in Arizona, as well as the northeastern portion of the GNF in New Mexico. The IFT now considers AF1212 to be part of the Fox Mountain Pack, while AM1287 and the newly

collared f1294 now comprise the Elk Horn Pack.

Fox Mountain Pack (collared AM1158, AF1212, m1276, mp1274 and fp1281)

Throughout January, the IFT documented these wolves traveling separately in the northwest portion of the GNF. The IFT documented AF1212 from the Elk Horn Pack traveling with AM1158 and m1276 of the Fox Mountain Pack, while mp1274 and fp1281 were traveling together, but separate from other collared pack members. All of these wolves were still located in the traditional pack territory for the both the Fox Mountain and Elk Horn Packs. The IFT now considers AF1212 to be part of the Fox Mountain Pack.

Luna Pack (collared AM1155, AF1115, mp1284, mp1285 and mp1286)

In January, the IFT located the pack within its traditional territory in the north-central portion of the GNF.

Middle Fork Pack (collared AM871 and AF861)

Throughout January, the IFT located these wolves within their traditional territory in the central portion of the GNF, including the Gila Wilderness Area.

San Mateo Pack (collared AM1157, AF903, m1249, mp1282 and fp1292)

In January, these wolves continued to use their traditional territory in the northern portion of the GNF. Later in the month, the IFT documented m1249 traveling away from the other pack members, but still within the pack territory

Willow Springs Pack (collared M1185 and F1279)

Throughout January, the IFT located these wolves in the north-central portion of the GNF.

m1243 (collared)

The IFT documented this wolf dispersing from the Paradise Pack in early December. Throughout January, the IFT located this wolf traveling widely through the GNF, including portions of the Gila Wilderness Area. No other wolves were documented traveling with m1243.

m1245 (collared)

The IFT documented this wolf dispersing from the Paradise Pack in early December. Throughout January, the IFT documented this wolf traveling widely through the GNF, including portions of the Gila Wilderness Area. No other wolves were documented traveling with m1245.

f1251 (collared)

The IFT documented this wolf dispersing from the Dark Canyon Pack in late December. Throughout January, the IFT located this wolf traveling separately from the pack members in the north-central portion of the GNF. During the end-of-year count, the IFT found an uncollared wolf traveling with f1251. The IFT will continue monitoring this pair to document potential formation of a new pack

MORTALITIES

No wolf mortalities were documented this month.

INCIDENTS

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

On January 19, WS personnel investigated a dead cow on New Mexico State Trust lands north of Mangas, New Mexico. The cause of death was undetermined, but not associated with predation.

On January 19, WS personnel investigated a dead calf on New Mexico State Trust lands north of Mangas, New Mexico. They determined the calf's death was caused by a wolf. The IFT has not yet assigned the incident to a specific wolf.

CAPTIVE MANAGEMENT

On January 3, Project personnel captured F1033 at the Sevilleta Wolf Management Facility and transferred it to the Ladder Ranch Wolf Management Facility.

On January 8, M1133 was transferred from Sevilleta to the BRWRA as an initial release into the Primary Recovery Zone in Arizona.

On January 16, M1052 and M1215 were transferred from Sevilleta to the Ladder Ranch Facility.

On January 17, M919 and M921 were transferred from the Living Desert Zoo and Gardens State Park in Carlsbad, New Mexico, to the Ladder Ranch Facility.

COMMUNICATION AND COORDINATION

IFT personnel conducted landowner phone calls in January ahead of planned helicopter population count and capture activities that occurred later in the month.

PROJECT PERSONNEL

FWS intern Anthony Saner left the Project this month. Thanks for the hard work, Anthony.

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.