



Mexican Wolf Blue Range Reintroduction Project Monthly Update

February 1-29, 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

At the end of February 2012, the collared population consisted of 33 wolves with functional radio collars dispersed among 13 packs and three single wolves. The IFT located several of the collared single wolves traveling with other packs and dispersing wolves this month. Some other uncollared wolves are known to be associating with radio-collared wolves, and others are separate from known packs.

IN ARIZONA:

Bluestem Pack (collared AM806, AF1042 and mp1240)

Throughout February, 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 this month.

Hawks Nest Pack (collared f1208, mp1244 and fp1247)

In February, these wolves continued to use their traditional territory in the north-central portion of the ASNF. The pups have been located traveling together and alone, away from F1208, but still within the pack's territory.

Rim Pack (collared AM1107 and AF858)

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

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

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

ON THE FAIR:

Maverick Pack M1183 (collared M1183)

During February, the IFT located this wolf traveling on the FAIR.

Tsay o Ah Pack (collared M1253)

During February, the IFT located this wolf traveling on the FAIR.

IN NEW MEXICO:

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

Throughout February, 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 February, the IFT documented these wolves traveling widely in the northwest portion of the GNF and in the central portion of the ASNF.

Luna Pack (collared AF1115, F1246 and mp1241)

In February, the IFT located the Luna Pack within its traditional territory in the north-central portion of the GNF. M1155 of the Morgart Pack was located traveling with AF1115 this month. The two other collared wolves from this pack continued to be located traveling away from AF1115 in February. F1246 was located traveling with m1248 in the central portion of the GNF, while mp1241 was located traveling alone on the edges of the Luna Pack territory on the GNF and just outside of the BRWRA.

Middle Fork Pack (collared AM871 and AF861)

In February, the IFT located AM871 and AF861 within their traditional territory in the central portion of the GNF, including the Gila Wilderness.

Morgart Pack (collared M1155)

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

San Mateo Pack (collared AM1157, AF903, and mp1249)

During February, the IFT located these wolves in the traditional San Mateo Pack territory in the north-central portion of the GNF.

Willow Springs Pack (collared M1185)

Throughout February, the IFT located this wolf in the north-central portion of the GNF.

m1248 (collared)

Throughout February, the IFT located this wolf traveling in the central portion of the GNF. They continued to document it traveling with F1246 this month.

f1212 (collared)

During February, the IFT located this wolf traveling in the north-central portion of the GNF. The IFT was unable to obtain a visual observation on this wolf this month to confirm if it was still traveling with an uncollared wolf. The IFT will continue to monitor it next month to determine its pairing status.

m1252 (collared)

Throughout February, the IFT located this wolf intermittently in the east-central portion of the GNF.

MORTALITIES

No wolf mortalities were documented during the month of February.

INCIDENTS

During February, IFT personnel investigated eight livestock depredation incidents in the BRWRA.

On February 7, WS personnel investigated two dead cows near Vernon, Arizona, outside of the BRWRA. They determined the cows were killed separately by at least one uncollared wolf just prior to the 7th.

On February 9, WS personnel investigated a dead yearling heifer in New Mexico just outside of the BRWRA near the state line with Arizona. The investigation revealed that the cow died of unknown causes.

On February 11, WS personnel investigated a dead mule on private property near the Elk Mountains on the GNF. They assigned the incident to an uncollared wolf.

On February 15, AGFD IFT personnel investigated a dead goat on private property in Lakeside, Arizona. They determined the goat was killed by domestic dogs.

On February 17, WS personnel investigated a dead cow north of Luna, New Mexico, and determined the cow died of unknown causes.

On February 24, WS personnel investigated a dead calf near Antelope Peak in Arizona. They determined the calf was killed by coyotes.

On February 26, WS personnel investigated an injured cow in the vicinity of Indian Creek on the GNF. They assigned the incident to one of the Middle Fork Pack members. The cow was still alive and receiving veterinary care at the time this update was developed.

CAPTIVE MANAGEMENT

On February 17-18, personnel at the Sevilleta Wolf Management Facility and Ladder Ranch Wolf Management Facility in New Mexico, in coordination with the Mexican Wolf Species Survival Plan, collected and froze semen from priority male wolves at the captive pre-release facilities for future research and use.

COMMUNICATION AND COORDINATION

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

A meeting of the Project cooperators was held on February 9 in Pinetop, Arizona, to discuss the development of project guiding documents, including an outline of the roles and responsibilities of the participating agencies and cooperators on the Mexican wolf project. Ten agency personnel and two county representatives attended the meeting.

PROJECT PERSONNEL

Two FWS interns left the Project this month. Rob Wise and Aaron Koehlinger were both hard-working team members, and they will be missed. Thanks, Rob and Aaron!

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.