



Mexican Wolf Blue Range Reintroduction Project Monthly Update

March 1-31, 2009

The following is a summary of Mexican Wolf Reintroduction 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 Web site at <http://www.azgfd.gov/wolf> or by visiting the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Web site at <http://www.fws.gov/southwest/es/mexicanwolf>. Past updates may be viewed on either Web site, 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), New Mexico Department of Game and Fish (NMDGF), 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). Other entities, including private individuals and nongovernmental organizations, cooperate through the Project's Adaptive Management Work Group (AMWG) that meets periodically in Arizona and New Mexico.

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 March 2009, the collared population consisted of 27 wolves with functional radio collars dispersed among 10 packs and four single wolves. Two wolves, F1118 from the Luna pack and a single animal, M1039, have not been located during aerial telemetry flights since early February, and are now considered fate unknown. Some other uncollared wolves are known to be associating with radio-collared wolves, and others are separate from known packs.

Seasonal note: Wolf pups are generally born between mid-April and mid-May. During the upcoming months, the IFT will be actively monitoring wolf packs to determine if females are denning in order to document wild-born pups and estimate their survival.

IN ARIZONA:

Bluestem Pack (collared AF521, AM806 and F1042)

Throughout the first half of March, the IFT located AF521 separately from the other Bluestem Pack members within their traditional territory on the ASNF. Later in the month, the IFT documented the three wolves traveling together. The IFT will continue to monitor the pack's travel patterns and dynamics to determine if F1042 is now the new alpha female of the Bluestem Pack.

Hawks Nest Pack (collared AM1044, AF1110 and mp1155)

Throughout March, the IFT located the Hawks Nest Pack in its traditional territory on the ASNF. The IFT documented mp1155 traveling separately from AF1110 and AM1044, but within the traditional territory of the Hawks Nest Pack.

Paradise Pack (collared AM795 and AF1056)

During March, the IFT located the Paradise Pack in its traditional territory on the northern portions of the ASNF and the FAIR.

Rim Pack (collared AF858 and AM1107)

Throughout March, the IFT located the Rim Pack within its traditional home range in the central portion of the ASNF.

M619 (collared)

During the first half of March, the IFT located M619 in the north and central portions of the ASNF. Later in March, the IFT located M619 in the western portion of the GNF in New Mexico.

ON THE FAIR:

Bacho Pack (collared AM990 and fp1154)

Throughout March, the IFT located the Bacho Pack within its traditional territory on the FAIR.

Lofer Pack

The IFT did not document any new members of the Lofer Pack in March. The previous alpha female of the pack, AF1056, is now the alpha female of the Paradise Pack. The IFT has documented uncollared wolves being associated with AF1056 when it was considered a member of this pack.

IN NEW MEXICO:

Dark Canyon (collared AM992 and AF923)

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

Luna Pack (collared M1156)

Throughout March, the IFT located M1156 of Luna Pack in its traditional territory in the central portion of the GNF. As a reminder, the IFT lost contact with the radio collar on F1118 in February, and this wolf's status is now considered fate unknown.

Middle Fork Pack (collared AM871 and AF861)

Throughout March, the IFT located the Middle Fork Pack within its traditional territory in the northern portion of the Gila Wilderness and central portion of the GNF.

San Mateo Pack (collared AF903 and AM1114)

Throughout March, the IFT located the San Mateo Pack within its traditional territory in the north-central portion of the GNF.

Fox Mountain Pack (collared AM1038, mp1157, mp1158 and mp1161)

Throughout a majority of March, the IFT located the Fox Mountain Pack in the western portion of the GNF. This pack spent about one week in Arizona in the vicinity of Escudilla Mountain during the middle of the month.

Laredo (collared F1028)

During March, the IFT documented F1028 in the central portion of the GNF.

F1115 (collared)

Throughout March, the IFT documented F1115 in the north-central portion of the Gila Wilderness, as well as the central portion of the GNF.

F1106 (collared)

During March, the IFT located F1106 in the northeastern and central portions of the GNF.

MORTALITIES

The IFT did not document any wolf mortalities during March.

INCIDENTS

The IFT investigated one potential livestock depredation incident during March. The cause of death was indeterminate. The summary is as follows:

On March 23, Wildlife Services personnel investigated a dead cow north of Eagle Peak in New Mexico. The carcass was estimated to have been at least a year old.

CAPTIVE MANAGEMENT

No significant activity occurred in the captive management program during March.

COMMUNICATION AND COORDINATION

On March 12, Paula Capece participated in a conference in Deming, New Mexico, regarding proactive management of wolf interactions with livestock, interacting with about 30 individuals.

On March 16, Chris Bagnoli participated in a meeting with five grazing permittees from the Eagle Creek Watershed Group to develop a Coordinated Resource Management Plan for several grazing allotments on the Clifton Ranger District on the ASNF in Arizona. The meeting involved discussions of proactive management options to reduce the potential for wolf depredations on cattle in the planning area.

On March 20, Beth Orning-Tschampl conducted a ride-along with a high school student from Flagstaff to discuss wolf reintroduction project issues.

PROJECT PERSONNEL

Bud Fazio has accepted the Mexican Wolf Recovery Project Coordinator position. Bud's previous position was with the Red Wolf Recovery Project in North Carolina, and has extensive wolf management and recovery experience with the USFWS. Welcome to the Project, Bud!

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 \$40,000 for a total reward amount of up to \$52,000, 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.