



Mexican Wolf Blue Range Reintroduction Project Monthly Update

March 1-31, 2011

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), 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 2011, the collared population consisted of 26 wolves with functional radio collars dispersed among nine packs and four single wolves. The IFT was able to capture and collar a new wolf associated with the Rim Pack in Arizona. The wolf was captured as part of opportunistic trapping efforts on the San Carlos Apache Reservation (SCAR) and assigned studbook number f1213. The IFT released it on the ASNF and documented it rejoining the Rim Pack several days later.

The IFT documented yearling male wolf m1183 from the Bluestem Pack traveling apart from the pack since December 2010, and we now consider this wolf to be single animal. During the end-of-year count operation in January, the IFT observed m1183 traveling with an uncollared wolf. In March, the IFT documented two other young wolves, mp1210 from the Hawks Nest Pack and f1187 from the Rim Pack, traveling alone in New Mexico, well outside of their traditional pack territories in Arizona.

IN ARIZONA:

Bluestem Pack (collared AM806 and AF1042)

Throughout March, the IFT located AM806 and AF1042 in their traditional territory in the central portion of the ASNF.

Hawks Nest Pack (collared AF1110, fp1208 and mp1210)

During early March, the IFT located the Hawks Nest Pack its traditional summer and winter territory in the north-central portion of the ASNF. In mid-March, the IFT located mp1210 away from the other Hawks Nest Pack members outside of the BRWRA north of Springerville. At the end of the month, we located this wolf traveling alone north of Quemado, New Mexico, well outside of the BRWRA. Wildlife Services personnel initiated trapping efforts to capture and translocate this wolf back into the BRWRA; however, the trapping was unsuccessful.

Rim Pack (collared AF858, AM1107, f1187 and f1213)

Throughout March, the IFT located the Rim Pack utilizing both its summer and winter range areas on the central portion of the ASNF. Toward the end of the month, the IFT located f1187 traveling alone in the west-central portion of the GNF.

m1183 (Collared)

During March the IFT located this wolf on the FAIR.

ON THE FAIR:

Paradise Pack (collared AF1056)

During March, the IFT located AF1056 within its traditional winter territory on the northwest portion of the ASNF. The IFT did document an uncollared wolf traveling with AF1056 this month.

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.

Fox Mountain Pack (collared M1158 and f1188)

Throughout the month, the IFT documented these wolves together in the northwestern portion of the GNF.

Luna Pack (collared M1156 and F1115)

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

Middle Fork Pack (collared AM871, AF861 and fp1211)

In March, the IFT located AM871, AF861 and fp1211 within their traditional territory in the central portion of the GNF and the Gila Wilderness Area.

Morgart's Pack (collared M1155)

Throughout March, the IFT documented this wolf traveling alone through the central portions of the GNF.

San Mateo Pack (collared AF903, fp1212 and M1157)

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

m1185 (collared)

Throughout March, the IFT located m1185 in the north-central portion of the GNF. It appears this wolf has begun to localize in this portion of the GNF.

F1105 (collared)

The IFT translocated this wolf into New Mexico near Hulse Lake late in January to facilitate a potential breeding pair with M1155, which did not occur. In March, the IFT documented this animal traveling alone through the northern portions of the GNF. We also noted F1105 repeatedly traveling near and onto a private elk farm in the northern portions of the GNF and potentially interacting with domestic dogs in the vicinity. No elk on the ranch were killed or injured. The IFT repaired the elk fence, and initiated trapping efforts to capture this wolf and perform an inspection regarding its breeding status. Attempts to capture this wolf were not successful, and we will continue to monitor its status.

MORTALITIES

No mortalities were reported this month.

INCIDENTS

The IFT investigated one report of a potential livestock depredation during March. On March 18, WS personnel investigated a dead bull calf near the Strayhorse campground in Arizona. The incident was confirmed as a wolf depredation, and the incident was attributed to an uncollared wolf or wolves. IFT personnel set traps in the area of the incident; however, no wolves were captured.

CAPTIVE MANAGEMENT

On March 29, personnel at the Sevilleta Wolf Management Facility captured M1130, M1133 and M1177, and transferred them to the wolf holding facility at the Ladder Ranch in New Mexico. On the same day, they captured F1064 and drew blood to conduct a pregnancy test. The test was positive indicating this wolf is pregnant from a breeding tie with M968 that occurred last month.

COMMUNICATION AND COORDINATION

On March 21, Chris Bagnoli and Liz Jozwiak attended a meeting of the Ranching Heritage Alliance at South Fork in Arizona and presented a wolf project update to 31 livestock producers and agency personnel.

PROJECT PERSONNEL

Ryan Wilbur, a FWS volunteer, left the Project this month. Ryan has been working with the staff in Alpine since August 2010, and his efforts will be greatly missed. Thanks, Ryan.

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.