



## Mexican Wolf Blue Range Reintroduction Project Monthly Update

March 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**

At the end of March 2012, the collared population consisted of 31 wolves with functional radio collars dispersed among 12 packs and three single wolves. The IFT located several of the collared single wolves traveling with other packs and dispersing wolves this month. The IFT documented one wolf mortality 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 AF1042 and mp1240)**

Throughout March, the IFT located these wolves in their traditional territory in the central portion of the ASNF. The radio telemetry collar for AM806 had been transmitting intermittently since January, and it appears the collar stopped working completely in March. AM806 is not included in this report due to its nonfunctioning radio telemetry collar.

#### **Hawks Nest Pack (collared f1208 and mp1244)**

In March, 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. In late March, the IFT located fp1247 dead within the pack's territory and the cause of death is under investigation.

#### **Rim Pack (collared AM1107 and AF858)**

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

### **ON THE FAIR:**

#### **Maverick Pack (collared AM1183)**

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

#### **Tsay o Ah Pack (collared AM1253)**

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

### **IN NEW MEXICO:**

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

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 March, 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 March, the IFT located the Luna Pack within its traditional territory in the north-central portion of the GNF. The IFT again located M1155 of the Morgart Pack traveling with AF1115 this month. The IFT now considers M1155 to be a part of the Luna Pack. The IFT located f1246 traveling with m1248 in the central portion of the GNF. These wolves were not traveling with AF1115 and M1155. The IFT did not locate mp1241 on telemetry flights or via ground telemetry during March and now consider this wolf to be a single animal. The IFT will continue with efforts to locate this wolf.

**Middle Fork Pack (collared AM871 and AF861)**

In March, 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 March, the IFT documented this wolf traveling with AF1115 in the north-central portion of the GNF, within the Luna Pack territory. The IFT now considers M1155 to be part of the Luna Pack, and the Morgart Pack to be defunct.

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

During March, 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 March, the IFT located this wolf in the north-central portion of the GNF.

**m1248 (collared)**

Throughout March, the IFT located this wolf traveling in the central portion of the GNF. The IFT continued to document it traveling with f1246 this month.

**f1212 (collared)**

During March, 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, but will continue to monitor it to determine its pairing status.

**m1252 (collared)**

In March, the IFT located this wolf intermittently in the east-central portion of the GNF.

**MORTALITIES**

During March, the IFT documented one wolf mortality. The IFT located fp1247 from the Hawks

Nest Pack dead in late March, and the cause of death is under investigation.

## **INCIDENTS**

During March, IFT personnel investigated five livestock depredation incidents in the BRWRA.

On March 5, WS personnel investigated a dead calf near Collins Park, New Mexico, and determined at least one wolf killed the calf. The incident has not yet been assigned to a specific wolf.

On March 6, WS personnel investigated a dead cow and calf east of Apache Creek in New Mexico. The investigation revealed that the cow died of unknown causes, while a wolf killed the calf. The incident was assigned to an uncollared wolf.

On March 13, WS personnel investigated a horse that sustained fatal injuries from entanglement in a barbed wire fence near the Spur Lake Basin on the GNF. The cause of this incident was undetermined.

On March 13, WS personnel investigated a dead cow north of Apache Creek, New Mexico, and determined the cow died of unknown causes.

On March 27, WS personnel investigated a dead cow north of Canovis Creek, just outside of the BRWRA in New Mexico, and determined at least one wolf killed the cow. The incident has not yet been assigned to a specific wolf.

## **CAPTIVE MANAGEMENT**

On March 21, Dr. Susan Dicks gave a Project overview and a wolf and wildlife veterinary medicine presentation to 15 veterinarians at the VCA Veterinary Care Center in Albuquerque.

On March 30, Project personnel captured M1200 and F1054 at the Sevilleta Wolf Management Facility and transported them to another Species Survival Plan facility.

## **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 March.

On March 3, IFT personnel set up and manned a Mexican wolf display at the inaugural Northeast Arizona Regional Science Fair and Carnival at the Show Low Middle School in Show Low, Arizona. Approximately 87 students and adults were contacted during the event, and it was well received. The event was an opportunity to discuss wolf identification and management techniques with local students, as well as adults.

On March 9, IFT personnel provided a Project update to 41 individuals at the Greenlee County Cattle Growers meeting in Duncan, Arizona.

On March 28, IFT personnel conducted a range rider workshop at the Reserve Ranger District Office in Reserve, New Mexico, to provide information regarding range riding techniques to reduce wolf livestock interactions on grazing allotments ahead of the summer grazing season. Dr. Kyran Kunkel from the University of Montana presented an overview of management efforts from work in Alberta, Canada, regarding proactive management efforts that are utilized there to reduce wolf depredations on grazing livestock. Nineteen range riders and livestock producers were in attendance, including from the WMAT and SCAR, and many valuable discussions regarding this effort took place during the workshop. Approximately ten range rider agreements are currently being developed for the summer grazing season on the ASNF, GNF, WMAT and SCAR.

On March 29, IFT personnel presented a Project update to ten students and one instructor in a natural resources management class at Central Arizona College in Coolidge, Arizona.

A Mexican Wolf MOU Executives Meeting was held on March 30 in Phoenix, Arizona. Several topics were discussed, including the final Mexican Wolf Project cooperators MOU, roles and responsibilities of Project cooperators, population objectives, future Mexican wolf release strategies, and an update regarding the Interdiction Stakeholder Council. In addition to executive personnel from the five agency cooperators, representatives from Greenlee and Graham counties in Arizona, as well as IFT personnel, also attended the meeting.

### **PROJECT PERSONNEL**

Two FWS interns joined the Project this month – Jonathan Fournier and Brent Wolf. Welcome to the team, Brent and Jonathan!

FWS intern Adair McNear left the Project in March. Thanks, Adair, for your dedicated efforts during your time here!

### **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.