



## Mexican Wolf Blue Range Reintroduction Project Monthly Update

April 1-30, 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 April 2009, the collared population consisted of 27 wolves with functional radio collars dispersed among 10 packs and five single wolves. 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 (AM806 and AF1042)**

The IFT located AM806 and F1042 in their traditional territory in the central portion of the ASNF in Arizona. Throughout the first half of April, the IFT located AF521 separately from the other Bluestem Pack members. This wolf traveled through the western portion of the GNF in New Mexico in early April. Later in the month, the IFT documented AF521 in the central portion of the ASNF in Arizona. The IFT now considers F1042 the new alpha female of the Bluestem Pack. AF521 is now considered a single animal.

##### **Hawks Nest Pack (collared AM1044, AF1110 and mp1155)**

Throughout April, the IFT located the Hawks Nest Pack in its traditional territory on the central portion of the ASNF.

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

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

##### **M619 (collared)**

During April, the IFT located M619 in the north-central portions of the ASNF.

##### **F521 (collared)**

Throughout the first half of April, the IFT located F521 separately from the other Bluestem Pack members. In the first part of April, this wolf traveled through the western portion of the GNF in New Mexico. Later in the month, the IFT documented F521 in the central portion of the ASNF in Arizona. F521 is now considered a single animal.

#### **ON THE FAIR:**

**Paradise Pack (collared AM795 and AF1056)**

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

**Bacho Pack (collared AM990 and fp1154)**

Throughout April, 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 April. The IFT now considers this pack defunct. The IFT will continue efforts to document other wolves in the traditional Lofer pack territory.

**IN NEW MEXICO:**

**Dark Canyon (collared AM992 and AF923)**

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

**Luna Pack (collared M1156)**

Throughout April, the IFT located Luna Pack M1156 in its traditional territory in the central portion of the GNF. As a reminder, the IFT lost the signal 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 April, 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 April, 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 April, the IFT located the Fox Mountain Pack in the western portion of the GNF.

**Laredo (collared F1028)**

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

**F1115 (collared)**

Throughout April, 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 April, the IFT located F1106 in the east-central portion of the GNF.

## **MORTALITIES**

The IFT did not document any wolf mortalities during March.

## **INCIDENTS**

The IFT investigated one potential livestock depredation incident during April. The summary is as follows:

On April 15, IFT personnel investigated a report of a dead calf in New Mexico near Highway 60 and the Arizona state line. The results of the investigation indicate that the calf was killed by a coyote.

## **CAPTIVE MANAGEMENT**

Personnel at the Sevilleta Wolf Management Facility documented the birth of a litter of pups to AF749. This wolf, along with its mate, AM660, and last year's yearling pups, m1130 and m1133, are scheduled to be released in Arizona in July 2009. The proposed release site is Engineer Springs, pending a site investigation by the IFT to determine overall habitat recovery from wildfires in the immediate area that occurred in 2008.

On April 10, IFT personnel assisted staff at Sevilleta in capturing and handling 10-week-old female pup 1167 for a veterinary examination, as well as routine vaccinations. Project personnel also captured F638, M730 and M731, and transferred them to the Rio Grande Zoo.

## **COMMUNICATION AND COORDINATION**

On April 2, Paula Capece met with a permittee and Range Conservation Technician from the Quemado Ranger District to discuss the wolf program and proactive management options.

On April 11, Chris Bagnoli and Jeff Dolphin presented a Project overview and radio telemetry workshop to 15 Arizona State University students at the Sipe White Mountain Wildlife Area in Arizona.

On April 13, Paula Capece met with a permittee in the Quemado Ranger District to discuss the wolf program and proactive management options.

On April 28, Paula Capece and Cathy Taylor met with a group of permittees in the Quemado Ranger District to discuss the wolf program.

On April 29, project personnel presented a project overview to nine individuals from a civic organization located in Buckeye, Arizona, at the WMAT Game and Fish Offices in Whiteriver.

On April 29, Maggie Dwire participated in the Junior Achievement Job Shadow event at the Rio Grande Nature Center in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

On April 30, Paula Capece and Cathy Taylor met with two separate permittees operating on the Reserve Ranger District to discuss the wolf program.

### **PROJECT PERSONNEL**

Beth Wojcik, a technician with New Mexico Department of Fish and Game, left her position with the Project this month. Beth was a tremendous asset, and her efforts will be missed. Thanks for all your hard work, Beth!

### **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.