



## Mexican Wolf Blue Range Reintroduction Project Monthly Update

April 1-30, 2013

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 breeding 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 2013, the collared population consisted of 49 wolves with functional radio collars dispersed among 15 packs and five single wolves. The IFT received a report from a private trapper regarding an uncollared wolf that he observed in one of his trap sets near the Luera Mountains in New Mexico. The IFT responded the same day and confirmed the animal was a Mexican wolf. The wolf was collared, given the designation M1296, transported back to the BRWRA, and released on the GNF. 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.

The IFT initiated two wolf release operations this month. On April 25, the IFT placed two pair-bonded wolves, M1051 and F1126, in a hard-sided holding pen on the Alpine Ranger District in Arizona. These wolves will be released later this spring after F1126 whelps its litter of pups inside the pen. This operation is considered an initial release of wolf F1126 (born in captivity) and a translocation of M1051, which was produced in the wild in 2007 and removed to captivity as a four-week-old pup. The pack has been named the Coronado Pack.

On April 27, the IFT transported two pair-bonded wolves, M1133 and F1108, to a mesh holding pen in the Gila Wilderness on the Wilderness Ranger District in New Mexico. At the end of April, these wolves were still inside the pen. The IFT anticipates they will chew out of the mesh pen soon and begin utilizing the Gila Wilderness. This is a translocation operation because both wolves have either been previously released into the BRWRA (M1133) or born in the wild (F1108). This pack has been named the Half Moon Pack.

The IFT documented the natural formation of another wolf pack during April. F1251 was documented traveling with an uncollared wolf in the GNF during the January helicopter survey. During field activities in April, the IFT confirmed the presence of another wolf with F1251. This pair has been named the Prieto Pack.

## **IN ARIZONA:**

### **Bluestem Pack (collared AF1042, mp1275, m1277, f1280 and f1289)**

Throughout April, the IFT located these wolves in their traditional territory in the east-central portion of the ASNF. The IFT confirmed that AF1042 is denning.

### **Coronado Pack (collared M1051 and F1126)**

On April 25, the IFT transported these wolves to a chain link enclosure in preparation for their release into the BRWRA. These wolves will be released from the pen after F1126 whelps its litter of pups, and they are large enough to travel away from the pen with M1051 and F1126. The IFT will continue to monitor this pair closely.

**Elk Horn Pack (collared AM1287 and F1294)**

In April, the IFT located these wolves traveling in the northeast portion of the ASNF in Arizona.

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

In April, the IFT located AM795 and AF1056 using their traditional territory in the northern portion of the ASNF and the FAIR.

**Rim (collared M1107)**

Throughout April, the IFT located M1107 utilizing the south-central portion of the ASNF and the SCAR. M1107 is still a single animal, and although it retains the pack name, it is not included in the overall pack total in the summary above.

**ON THE FAIR:**

**Maverick Pack (collared AM1183, m1290 and f1291)**

During April, the IFT located m1290 and f1291 on the FAIR. The IFT located m1290 traveling separately from other pack members during the last two weeks of April, in the west-central portion of the ASNF. Later in the month, m1290 returned to the pack. The IFT did not locate AM1183 in April, and it is likely that its telemetry collar has stopped working.

**Tsay o Ah Pack (collared AM1253 and f1283)**

During April, the IFT located AM1253 and f1283 on the FAIR. The IFT has not located M1254 since late January. The IFT now considers this wolf to be fate unknown.

**IN NEW MEXICO:**

**Canyon Creek Pack (collared M1252 and F1246)**

In April, these wolves were located traveling together in the central portion of the GNF.

**Dark Canyon Pack (collared AM992, AF923, M1293 and f1278)**

Throughout April, the IFT located this pack within its traditional territory in the west-central portion of the GNF. Later in April, the IFT documented f1278 traveling away from the pack with M1244.

**Fox Mountain Pack (collared AM1158, AF1212, M1276, m1274, f1281 and f1295)**

During April, the IFT documented these wolves in the northwest portion of the GNF. The IFT documented denning behavior with this pack this month.

**Half Moon Pack (collared M1133 and F1108)**

On April 27, Project personnel, utilizing specially trained pack mules, transported M1133 and F1108 into the Gila Wilderness and placed them in a temporary mesh pen at the McKenna Park translocation site.

**Luna Pack (collared AM1155, AF1115, m1284, m1285 and m1286)**

In April, the IFT located these wolves in the north-central portion of the GNF. The IFT

confirmed that AF1115 is denning.

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

The IFT did not locate these wolves during April. The radio collars for these two animals are most likely no longer functioning. The IFT continued with ground efforts to locate these wolves; however, they did not document any wolf sign in this pack's traditional territory. If the pack is not located in May, the IFT will consider its fate unknown and remove it from the summary totals above.

**Prieto Pack (collared F1251)**

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

**San Mateo Pack (collared AM1157, AF903, M1249, m1282 and f1292)**

In April, most of these wolves continued to use their traditional territory in the northern portion of the GNF. The IFT obtained a visual observation of M1249 traveling alone in Arizona, south of Alpine. The IFT located f1292 dead in early April, and the incident is under investigation.

**Willow Springs Pack (collared M1185 and F1279)**

Throughout April, the IFT located these wolves in the north-central portion of the GNF. The IFT documented denning behavior with this pack this month.

**M1240 (collared)**

The IFT documented this wolf traveling widely throughout the BRWRA in April. The IFT documented this animal primarily in the central portion of the GNF.

**M1243 (collared)**

Throughout April, the IFT has not been able to locate this wolf.

**M1244 (collared)**

Throughout April, the IFT located this wolf traveling in the central portion of the GNF, north of the Gila Wilderness. In late April, M1244 was located with Dark Canyon Pack f1278.

**M1296 (collared)**

The IFT located this newly collared wolf in the eastern portion of the GNF during the later portion of April.

**MORTALITIES**

During April, the IFT located single wolf fp1292 dead in the BRWRA. The cause of death is under investigation.

**INCIDENTS**

During April, IFT personnel investigated eight livestock depredation incidents and one nuisance report in the BRWRA.

On April 5, the IFT received information from NMGFD personnel regarding a report of two wolves near a home near Sand Flats in New Mexico. The reporting party was concerned that they may attack a domestic dog. IFT personnel responded and confirmed that wolves from the San Mateo Pack had been in the area.

On April 6, WS personnel investigated a dead cow and full-term unborn calf north of Luna, New Mexico. WS personnel determined the cause of death was wolf predation. The incident was assigned to M1158 and possibly one wolf from the Fox Mountain Pack, M1276 or F1212.

On April 6, WS personnel investigated the remains of an adult cow in the vicinity of Freeman Mountain in New Mexico. The cause of death could not be determined.

On April 21, WS personnel investigated a dead calf on Arizona State Trust lands north of Highway 60 near Vernon and confirmed was killed by wolves. The IFT set up a trail camera on the carcass to attempt to identify the wolves responsible. A dog with a collar was photographed. No collared wolves were located in the area.

On April 24, WS personnel investigated a dead calf near Antelope Tank north of Freeman Mountain on GNF and confirmed it as wolf depredation. The incident was assigned to an uncollared wolf. The IFT set up a diversionary food cache near the Fox Mountain den location.

On April 25, WS personnel investigated two calf carcasses on Arizona State Trust lands north of Highway 60 near Vernon and confirmed that both calves were killed by one or more wolves. The carcasses were older and were located in the same vicinity as the calf carcass investigated on April 21. No collared wolves have been located in the vicinity of the carcasses. Both carcasses were considered as separate depredation events.

On April 29, WS personnel investigated a calf carcass on Arizona State Trust lands north of Highway 60 near Vernon and confirmed the calf was killed by wolves. The incident was assigned to an uncollared wolf. The carcass was located in the same vicinity as the calf carcass investigated on April 21. IFT personnel initiated trapping operations in the area on April 30.

On April 29, WS personnel investigated a dead calf north of Toriette Lakes in New Mexico. The cause of death was not related to wolf predation.

### **CAPTIVE MANAGEMENT**

On April 10, Project personnel captured F1032 and M1201 at the Sevilleta Wolf Management Facility (Sevilleta) and transferred them to Universidad Autonoma de Queretaro in Mexico.

On April 25, Project personnel captured M1051 and F1126 at Sevilleta and transferred them to the IFT for placement in a chain link enclosure in preparation for their release into the BRWRA

On April 26, Project personnel captured M1133 and F1108 at Sevilleta and transferred them to a temporary mesh pen at the McKenna Park translocation site in the Gila Wilderness in New Mexico.

## **COMMUNICATION AND COORDINATION**

IFT personnel presented a Project update to a natural resources management class at Central Arizona College in Coolidge, Arizona, this month. Approximately 15 students and instructors were present for the discussion.

Project personnel and FWS met with Catron County officials, representatives from the New Mexico Cattlegrowers Association, and local livestock producers at an invited meeting at the Beaverhead Lodge in New Mexico to discuss the proposed translocation of F1108 and M1133 wolves from captivity into the Gila Wilderness. Approximately 30 people attended the meeting.

Project personnel and FWS held a public meeting in Reserve, New Mexico, to discuss the proposed translocation of F1108 and M1133 from captivity into the Gila Wilderness in New Mexico. Approximately 45 people attended the meeting.

IFT personnel presented wolf conservation and management discussions to six animal sciences classes at Snowflake High School in Snowflake, Arizona, contacting approximately 70 students.

## **PROJECT PERSONNEL**

Ben Betterly, a FWS intern, left the Project during April. Thanks for all of your hard work, Ben!

Lily Glidden, a FWS intern, left the Project during April. Thanks for all of your hard work, Lily!

Brandon Tritsch joined the Project as a FWS intern this month.

## **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.