



## **Mexican Wolf Blue Range Reintroduction Project Monthly Update**

May 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 May 2011, the collared population consisted of 25 wolves with functional radio collars dispersed among nine packs and three single wolves. The IFT captured a previously unknown wolf in New Mexico as the result of a call from a concerned citizen near Reserve. The caller reported a sick coyote that appeared to be larger than a normal coyote. IFT personnel responded the same day and located an emaciated wolf that they were able to capture. A Project veterinarian from the FWS administered treatment on site; however, it died during transport to the veterinary clinic. The cause of death is under investigation.

The IFT continued efforts to capture and inspect F1105 to determine its breeding status in May. During these efforts, the IFT located a den with five pups. They inspected the pups at the den site and collected blood samples for analysis to determine the genetic makeup of the pups. Tests showed the pups were the result of the female breeding with a domestic dog. IFT personnel returned to the den and removed the four pups present. The four pups were then humanely euthanized. The IFT will continue to monitor F1105 in the near future to determine if a fifth pup is surviving.

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. At the end of May, the IFT determined the following packs are exhibiting denning behavior: Paradise, Hawks Nest, Bluestem, Rim, Fox Mountain, San Mateo, Luna and Dark Canyon. The IFT has confirmed the presence of pups in several packs, including Hawks Nest, Bluestem and San Mateo.

### **IN ARIZONA:**

#### **Bluestem Pack (collared AM806 and AF1042)**

Throughout May, the IFT located AM806 and AF1042 in their traditional territory in the central portion of the ASNF. The IFT confirmed at least three pups with this pack in May.

#### **Hawks Nest Pack (collared AF1110 and f1208)**

In May, AF1110 and f1208 continued to use their traditional territory in the north-central portion of the ASNF. The IFT confirmed a large-sized, uncollared wolf, presumably a male, traveling with the pack. The IFT has confirmed the presence of five pups with this pack.

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

Throughout May, the IFT located the Rim Pack utilizing its summer range on the central portion of the ASNF. These wolves remain localized in a portion of their territory indicating that AF858 is most likely tending a den.

**Paradise Pack (collared AF1056)**

In May, AF1056 was utilizing the traditional summer range of its territory on the northern portion of the ASNF. This wolf has localized its movements, indicating it is most likely tending a den.

**ON THE FAIR:**

**M1183 (Collared)**

During May, the IFT located this wolf on the FAIR.

**IN NEW MEXICO:**

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

Throughout May, the IFT located the Dark Canyon Pack within its traditional territory in the west-central portion of the GNF. This pack has localized in a portion of its territory, indicating the wolves are denning.

**Fox Mountain Pack (collared M1158 and F1188)**

Throughout May, the IFT documented these wolves together in the northwest portion of the GNF. They have localized their movements within a portion of their territory this month, indicating possible denning activity.

**Luna Pack (collared AM1156 and AF1115)**

In May, the IFT located the Luna Pack within its traditional territory in the north-central portion of the GNF. Throughout May, AF1115 localized in a specific portion of its territory, indicating possible denning activity. The IFT did not locate AM1156 using telemetry equipment during May. The IFT last located this wolf in April.

**Middle Fork Pack (collared AM871, AF861 and f1211)**

In May, the IFT located AM871, AF861 and f1211 within their traditional territory in the central portion of the GNF and the Gila Wilderness Area. They have localized their movements within a portion of their territory this month, indicating possible denning activity.

**Morgart's Pack (collared M1155)**

Throughout May, the IFT documented this wolf traveling through the central portions of the GNF. Toward the end of May, the IFT received information that this wolf may be traveling with another smaller-sized wolf.

**San Mateo Pack (collared AM1157, AF903 and f1212)**

During May, the IFT located these wolves in the traditional San Mateo Pack territory in the

north-central portion of the GNF. The IFT has determined that this pack is denning and has produced at least five pups this year.

#### **M1185 (collared)**

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

#### **F1105 (collared)**

In May, the IFT documented this wolf traveling alone through the northern portions of the GNF. The IFT continued with trapping efforts in May to capture it and perform an inspection regarding its breeding status. During these efforts, they located a den with five pups. IFT personnel inspected the pups at the den site and collected blood samples for analysis to determine their genetic makeup. Tests indicated the pups were the result of the female breeding with a domestic dog. IFT personnel returned to the den, removed the four pups present, and humanely euthanized them. The IFT will continue to monitor F1105 in the near future to determine if a fifth pup is surviving.

#### **MORTALITIES**

On May 6, the IFT responded to a report of an injured or sick wolf observed outside of Reserve, New Mexico. They captured an uncollared wolf, and a FWS veterinarian examined it in the field. The wolf died during transport to a veterinary facility in Arizona. An investigation into the cause of death is pending.

#### **INCIDENTS**

On May 13, WS personnel investigated an injured horse colt outside of Eagar, Arizona. The colt sustained bites to its neck and back; however, it survived its injuries. The incident was assigned to domestic dogs.

On May 19, WS personnel investigated a dead calf at South Fork, Arizona, and determined it was killed by coyotes.

On May 24, WS personnel investigated a dead cow and calf in the vicinity of Sand Flat on the GNF in New Mexico. They determined the cow was killed by a wolf, and the calf was a probable wolf kill. The incident was assigned to AM1157 and f1212 from the San Mateo Pack.

#### **CAPTIVE MANAGEMENT**

On or about May 1, F1064 whelped a litter of five pups at the Sevilleta Wolf Management Facility in New Mexico. These pups, along with adults M968 and F1064 and yearlings 1200, 1201, 1202, 1203 and 1204, have been proposed for potential release in Arizona during the summer of 2011.

#### **COMMUNICATION AND COORDINATION**

On May 23, the IFT conducted a public meeting at the Alpine Community Center in Alpine,

Arizona, to discuss the proposed initial release of a wolf pack into the primary recovery area in Arizona. The meeting was attended by approximately 45 stakeholders and agency personnel. The majority opinion was opposed to the Mexican Wolf Project in general and the proposed initial release in particular.

On May 25, the IFT provided a Project management overview geared to students at St. Johns Middle School in St. Johns, Arizona. Approximately 156 fourth through seventh grade students were contacted with this program, and it was well received.

### **PROJECT PERSONNEL**

Tracy Pinter joined the Project as a wildlife technician for the FWS this month. Welcome to the Project, Tracy!

Pete Fitzpatrick joined the Project as a wildlife technician for the FWS in May. Welcome to the Project, Pete!

Allison Greenleaf joined the Project as an AGFD wildlife technician this month. Welcome back to the Project, Allison!

Jacob Humm and Melissa Ruszczyk, both FWS volunteers, left the Project in May. Thanks to both of you for all your hard work!

### **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.