



## Mexican Wolf Blue Range Reintroduction Project Monthly Update

May 1-31, 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 May 2013, the collared population consisted of 45 wolves with functional radio collars dispersed among 14 packs and five single wolves. The IFT removed one wolf this month due to its persistence outside the BRWRA boundary.

There were two ongoing wolf-release operations this month. The IFT has maintained two pair-bonded wolves, M1051 and F1126, in a hard-sided, holding pen on the Alpine Ranger District in Arizona. On May 22, the IFT investigated the pen for any pups produced by F1126. None were found, and it is suspected that the litter has died. This operation is considered an initial release of wolf F1126, as it was born in captivity, and a translocation of M1051, which was born in the wild in 2007 and removed to captivity as a four-week-old pup. The pack has been designated the Coronado Pack.

On May 4, two other pair-bonded wolves, M1133 and F1108, self-released when they chewed out of the soft-mesh pen situated in the Gila Wilderness on the Wilderness Ranger District in New Mexico. The female localized near the release site. The male left the area, traveling to Monticello, New Mexico, where the IFT captured it on May 11 and returned it to captivity. The IFT suspects F1108 whelped pups and is caring for them. The IFT set up a food cache in the area for F1108, and have documented the wolf using the cache. 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 designated the Half Moon Pack.

## **IN ARIZONA:**

### **Bluestem Pack (collared AF1042, m1275, m1277, f1280 and f1289)**

Throughout May, the IFT located these wolves in their traditional territory in the east-central portion of the ASNF. The pack has remained close to its den site. The IFT confirmed that AF1042 produced three to five pups. Bluestem m1277 has left the pack, and the IFT have located it near the Lure and San Mateo Mountains in New Mexico.

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

On May 22, the IFT confirmed M1051 and F1126 had no pups in their acclimation pen, and now suspect the litter has died. During May, volunteers observed Rim M1107 and an uncollared wolf near the pen. The IFT initiated trapping efforts to capture and collar the uncollared wolf traveling with M1107.

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

In May, the IFT located these wolves traveling in the northeast portion of the ASNF in Arizona, with occasional forays into the GNF in New Mexico.

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

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

**Rim (collared M1107)**

Throughout May, the IFT located M1107 utilizing the south-central portion of the ASNF and the SCAR. Volunteers observed M1107 visiting the Coronado Pack acclimation pen with an uncollared wolf. The IFT initiated trapping in an attempt to capture and collar the uncollared wolf, but have been unsuccessful to date.

**ON THE FAIR:**

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

During May, the IFT located m1290 and f1291 on and off the FAIR in the area of the west-central portion of the ASNF. The IFT did not locate AM1183 in May. It is likely that its telemetry collar has ceased working, and thus is not included in the individual summary above.

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

During May, 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 May, these wolves were located traveling together in the central portion of the GNF.

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

Throughout May, the IFT located this pack within its traditional territory in the west-central portion of the GNF. In April, the IFT documented f1278 traveling away from the pack with single wolf M1244. The IFT has documented denning behavior and suspects that Dark Canyon is caring for pups born in April.

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

During May, the IFT documented these wolves in the northwest portion of the GNF. The IFT has documented denning behavior with this pack, and a food cache has been maintained to help alleviate any depredation issues.

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

On May 4, M1133 and F1108 chewed out of their holding pen in the Gila Wilderness. Shortly after this release, M1133 traveled to Monticello, New Mexico, where it was captured on May 11 and returned to captivity. F1108 has localized near the translocation site. The IFT believes it whelped pups and is currently caring for them. The IFT is maintaining a food cache nearby, and F1108 has been documented visiting the cache area.

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

In May, the IFT located these wolves in the north-central portion of the GNF. The IFT confirmed that AF1115 is denning and is caring for four to six pups.

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

The IFT did not locate these wolves during May. The telemetry 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. The pack was not located in May, and the IFT now considers these wolves to be fate unknown, thus they are not included in the summary totals above.

**Prieto Pack (collared F1251)**

Throughout May, the IFT located this wolf in the north-central portion of the GNF. The IFT has documented denning behavior from this pack. The IFT has observed an uncollared wolf on a trail camera with F1251. The IFT is maintaining a food cache near the suspected den site to alleviate potential depredation issues.

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

In May, most of these wolves continued to use their traditional territory in the northern portion of the GNF. No denning behavior has been documented in this pack this year. The IFT has not received a recent telemetry signal from AM1157. It is likely that its telemetry collar has ceased working, and thus is not included in the individual summary above.

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

Throughout May, the IFT located these wolves in the north-central portion of the GNF. The IFT documented denning behavior with this pack this month, and has confirmed this pack is caring for at least five pups.

**M1240 (collared)**

The IFT documented this animal primarily in the central portion of the GNF throughout May.

**M1243 (collared)**

Throughout May, the IFT was not able to locate this wolf.

**M1244 (collared)**

Throughout May, the IFT located this wolf traveling in the central portion of the GNF, north of the Gila Wilderness. The IFT located M1244 with the Dark Canyon Pack f1278 throughout May.

**M1296 (collared)**

On May 20, the IFT heard a live telemetry signal from this wolf west of Indian Peaks in the GNF. The IFT has not located this wolf since.

**MORTALITIES**

There were no known wolf mortalities in May.

**INCIDENTS**

IFT personnel investigated five livestock depredation incidents, all in New Mexico, and no nuisance reports in the BRWRA during May.

On May 2, WS personnel investigated two dead calves east of Turner Peak, and confirmed the deaths as wolf kills.

On May 5, WS personnel investigated a dead calf outside the BRWRA boundary on state-leased land near Monticello. They confirmed a wolf was responsible for the death of the calf as it was being birthed. The depredation was assigned to M1133, which was later captured in the area and returned to captivity.

On May 12, WS personnel investigated an injured calf south of Eagle Peak. The calf was euthanized by the owners due to the extent of the injuries. WS confirmed the incident to be wolf-caused.

On May 14, WS personnel investigated another calf depredation incident south of Eagle Peak. That calf was also euthanized due to the extent of its injuries. WS confirmed that incident to be wolf-caused, as well.

On May 31, WS personnel investigated the death of a yearling cow south of Gallo Peak. They determined the cause of death to be unknown, but not due to predation.

### **CAPTIVE MANAGEMENT**

No significant activity this month.

### **COMMUNICATION AND COORDINATION**

No significant activity this month.

### **PROJECT PERSONNEL**

Two new FWS interns, Yuki Nonaka and Chelsea Vosburgh, began working for the Project this month. Welcome to the Project!

### **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.