

Mexican Wolf Blue Range Reintroduction Project Monthly Update

June 1 - 30, 2008

The following is a summary of Mexican wolf reintroduction project activities in Arizona on the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests (ASNF) and in New Mexico on the Apache National Forest (ANF) and Gila National Forest (GNF), collectively known as the Blue Range Wolf Reintroduction Area (BRWRA). Additional 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) located on the Fort Apache Indian Reservation (FAIR). Other entities cooperate through the Adaptive Management Work Group (AMWG) that meets quarterly in Arizona and/or New Mexico, including private individuals, organizations and tribes.

To view the 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 18 months or pups. The capital letter "A" preceding the letter and number indicate alpha wolves.

Definitions: For the purposes of the Monthly Update, a "wolf pack" is defined as two or more wolves that maintain an established home range. 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 June, the collared population consisted of 22 wolves with functional radio collars dispersed among 12 packs and one single wolf. Other uncollared wolves are known to be associating with wolves having radio collars, as well as being separate from known packs.

Seasonal note: Wolf pups are generally born between mid-April and mid-May. The IFT has been actively monitoring wolf packs during the past months to determine if females are denning in order to document wild-born pups and estimate their survival. Based on location information from the last 11 weeks, the IFT has documented denning behavior for the following packs: Hawks Nest, Paradise, Rim, Bacho, Dark Canyon, Middle Fork, Fox Mountain, and possibly San Mateo and Luna.

IN ARIZONA:

Bluestem Pack (collared AF521, AM806 and F1042)

Throughout June, the IFT located the Bluestem pack in their traditional territory on the ASNF and the FAIR.

Hawks Nest Pack (collared M1044 and AF1110)

Throughout June, the IFT located the Hawks Nest pack in their traditional territory on the ASNF. On June 19, the IFT located two possible den sites; one with evidence of recent use. The IFT did not observe pups in June.

Paradise Pack (collared AM795)

On June 7, IFT members found the carcass of an uncollared adult female wolf within the Paradise pack's territory. On June 8, the IFT found two dead wolf pups in the vicinity of the pack's den site. Law enforcement investigated both scenes and necropsy results indicate the cause of death to be indeterminate for all. The IFT identified the adult as F758, which was originally released as part of the Bluestem Pack in 2002. Genetic testing is being conducted to determine if F758 was the mother of the pups, as is suspected by the IFT. Throughout the remainder of June, the IFT continued to locate AM795 within the pack's traditional territory on the ASNF.

Rim Pack (collared AF858 and AM1107)

Throughout June, the IFT located the Rim pack within their traditional home range in the central portion of the ASNF.

M619 (collared)

During June, the IFT located M619 in the central and northern portions of the ASNF and ANF in Arizona and New Mexico and the FAIR.

ON THE FAIR:

Bacho Pack (collared AM990)

Throughout June, the IFT located the Bacho pack on the FAIR.

Lofer Pack (collared AF1056)

Throughout June, the IFT located the Lofer pack on the FAIR.

IN NEW MEXICO:

Dark Canyon (collared AM992 and AF923)

Throughout June, the IFT located the Dark Canyon pack in their traditional territory in the west-central portion of the GNF.

Laredo Pack (collared AF1028 and AM1008)

AF1028 and AM1008 were moved from Sevilleta Wolf Management Facility and transferred into a temporary translocation pen at McKenna Park in the Gila Wilderness on June 17. On June 19, the Laredo pack chewed through the translocation pen, as planned. The IFT located the pack within the Wilderness throughout the remainder of June.

Luna Pack (collared F1118)

During June, the IFT searched the traditional Luna territory for wolf sign and set traps in order to capture and collar any remaining members of the pack. On June 14, the IFT captured, collared and released F1118. F1118 is currently considered to be a member of the Luna pack, pending genetic analysis.

Middle Fork Pack (collared AM871, AF861 and F1115)

The IFT located the Middle Fork pack on and adjacent to the northern portion of the Gila Wilderness and central portion of the GNF throughout June.

San Mateo Pack (collared AF903 and AM1114)

Throughout June, the IFT located the pack in the east-central portion of the ANF. On June 26, the IFT confirmed that the San Mateo pack was involved in a livestock depredation (see "Incidents" below).

Fox Mountain Pack (collared AM1038 and AF1111)

Throughout June, the IFT continued to locate the Fox Mountain pack in the northwestern portion of the ANF. On June 23, the IFT observed three pups with the Fox Mountain pack. On June 24, the IFT located the carcass of AF1111. Necropsy results indicate AF1111 was unlawfully shot.

Elk Mountain Pack (collared AM1045)

Throughout June, the IFT continued to search unsuccessfully for AM1045. The IFT last detected it on March 27, 2008, and it is considered "fate unknown." It will be dropped from the monthly updates, pending new information.

MORTALITIES

On June 7, the IFT found an uncollared adult female wolf dead within the Paradise pack territory. Law enforcement investigated the scene and collected the carcass. Necropsy results indicate cause of death as indeterminate.

On June 8, the IFT located two dead wolf pups in the vicinity of the Paradise pack den site. Law enforcement investigated the scene and collected the carcasses. Necropsy results indicate cause of death as indeterminate.

On June 24, the IFT located the carcass of AF1111 of the Fox Mountain pack. Members of the IFT and law enforcement agents investigated the scene and collected the carcass for necropsy. Results indicate that it was unlawfully shot.

INCIDENTS

In total, the IFT investigated two potential livestock injuries and 11 depredations in June. Of the 11 depredation investigations, the IFT confirmed one as a wolf depredation, two as coyote depredations, five died of natural causes, and the cause of death was unknown in three cases. The IFT confirmed one of the reported livestock injuries as being caused by a black bear and the other to have been caused by a coyote. Summaries of the investigations are as follows:

On June 5, a dead calf in Alpine, AZ, was reported to the IFT. Investigation confirmed the calf as a coyote depredation.

On June 5, the IFT investigated a report of an injured calf near Collins Park, NM. The IFT confirmed the injuries as being caused by a black bear.

On June 8, the IFT investigated a report of a dead calf near Collins Park. There was no evidence of wolves in the area and the IFT observed coyote tracks in the area. The cause of death was considered unknown.

On June 9, the IFT discovered a dead calf near Greer, AZ. Investigation indicated the cause of death as unknown natural causes.

On June 14, the IFT received a report of a dead calf in Alpine. Investigation determined it to be a confirmed coyote depredation.

On June 14, the IFT discovered one dead cow and two dead calves near Greer, AZ. The three investigations revealed that the adult cow died of unknown natural causes; the calf belonging to the deceased cow died of malnutrition; and another calf died of respiratory illness.

On June 18, the IFT discovered a dead cow in Alpine, and investigation revealed the cause of death to be unknown natural causes.

On June 26, the IFT discovered a dead cow in the vicinity of Gallo Canyon, NM. Investigation confirmed the cow as a wolf depredation. The IFT assigned the depredation to San Mateo pack members AF903 and AM1114. This is the second confirmed depredation for these wolves within 365 days; the other having occurred on March 29, 2008.

On June 30, the carcass of a yearling cow was reported in Gallo Canyon. An IFT investigation determined the carcass was greater than two weeks old and that it had been fed on by a black bear, but the cause of death was unknown. The IFT found both wolf and coyote sign in the area.

On June 30, the IFT investigated a dead calf north of Luna, NM, and determined the calf died of unknown causes.

On June 30, the IFT investigated a report of an injured goat near Dragoon, AZ, and confirmed the injuries as being caused by a coyote.

CAPTIVE MANAGEMENT

On June 16, F1028 and M1008 were captured at Sevilleta Wolf Management Facility and transported to a translocation site in the Gila Wilderness on June 17 (see Laredo Pack above).

COMMUNICATION AND COORDINATION

The IFT continued to communicate and coordinate with members of the public and livestock operators. The IFT delivered no public programs during June.

PROJECT PERSONNEL

Omission from May: Former USFWS volunteer James Waddell began his internship with NMDGF.

Kenneth Mills left his position as the Mexican Wolf Field Team Leader for the NMDGF on June 24th to take a position in Wyoming. His endeavors and insights are greatly appreciated, and project personnel wish him the best of luck!

Allison Greenleaf accepted a position as a USFWS volunteer.

AGFD Wildlife Specialist Cecilia Schmidt completed her temporary duty assignment on June 25th. Thanks, Cecilia, your assistance was greatly appreciated!

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, AZ, at (480) 967-7900, in Alpine, AZ, at (928) 339-4232, or in Albuquerque, NM, at (505) 346-7828; the WMAT at (928) 338-1023 or (928) 338-4385; AGFD Operation Game Thief at 1-800-352-0700; or NMDGF Operation Game Thief at 1-800-432-4263. 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.