



## Mexican Wolf Blue Range Reintroduction Project Monthly Update

June 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 June 2009, the collared population consisted of 26 wolves with functional radio collars dispersed among 10 packs and four single wolves. Some other uncollared wolves are known to be associating with radio-collared wolves, and others are separate from known packs.

On June 7, the IFT trapped and removed fp1154 from the San Carlos Apache Indian Reservation (SCAIR), and later took it to the Sevilleta Wolf Management Facility (Sevilleta). The IFT trapped this wolf because it became establishing outside the reintroduction project boundary. It is now eligible for translocation within the Project area.

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. Based on location information from the past few weeks, the IFT has documented denning behavior for the Hawks Nest, Bluestem, Rim, Bacho, Paradise, Dark Canyon, Middle Fork and San Mateo Packs.

### **IN ARIZONA:**

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

Throughout June, the IFT located AM806 and AF1042 in their traditional territory in the central portion of the ASNF.

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

During June, the IFT located the Hawks Nest Pack in its traditional territory in the central portion of the ASNF. The IFT documented at least seven pups with this pack during June.

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

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

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

During June, the IFT located M619 in the north-central portion of the ASNF and northeastern portion of the FAIR.

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

Throughout June, the IFT located F521 with the Fox Mountain Pack on the northwestern portion of the GNF in New Mexico and the eastern portion of the ASNF in Arizona. The IFT now considers F521 to be a member of the Fox Mountain Pack.

## **ON THE FAIR:**

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

During June, the IFT located the Paradise Pack within its traditional territory on the northern portion of the FAIR.

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

Throughout June, the IFT located AM990 within its traditional territory on the FAIR. The IFT located this wolf on the SCAIR during May. Due to this activity, the IFT trapped and removed fp1154 from the SCAIR and took it to Sevilleta.

## **IN NEW MEXICO:**

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

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

### **Luna Pack (collared M1156)**

Throughout June, the IFT located M1156 in its traditional territory in the central portion of the GNF.

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

Throughout June, the IFT located the Middle Fork Pack within its traditional territory in the central portion of the GNF.

### **San Mateo Pack (collared AF903 and AM1114)**

Throughout June, 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 June, the IFT located the Fox Mountain Pack within its traditional territory in the northwestern portion of the GNF. F521, formerly of the Bluestem Pack, is now considered a member of the Fox Mountain Pack.

### **Laredo (collared F1028)**

During June, the IFT documented F1028 in the northwestern portion of the GNF.

### **F1115 (collared)**

Throughout June, the IFT documented F1115 in the north-central portion of the GNF.

### **F1106 (collared)**

During June, the IFT located F1106 in the central and north-central portions of the GNF.

## **MORTALITIES**

During June, the IFT documented denning behavior associated with the San Mateo Pack, and

later discovered three dead pups in the vicinity of the den site. The IFT also utilized remote cameras and documented the presence of two abandoned pups. Both pups have been captured and removed to captivity. The IFT observed at least one pup still accompanying the pack at the end of June.

## **INCIDENTS**

In total, the IFT investigated four potential depredation incidents in June. Of the four, the IFT confirmed one as a wolf depredation. The remaining investigations did not implicate wolves. Summaries of the investigations are as follows:

On June 7, the IFT discovered a dead calf in the Coyote Peak area on BLM lands in New Mexico. The livestock owner did not offer permission to conduct a full investigation. Based on the limited investigation that was conducted, the calf appeared to have been struck and killed by vehicle.

On June 15, the IFT conducted a depredation investigation on a dead calf on private land near Old Horse Spring, New Mexico. This was determined to be a confirmed coyote depredation.

On June 15, WS personnel investigated a dead calf near Cat Spring, New Mexico, and determined that it was killed by wolves. The IFT assigned the incident to AM1114 and AF903 of the San Mateo Pack. At the time of the incident, this was the fourth assigned depredation for AM1114 and the second assigned depredation incident for AF903 in 365 days. On June 19, the FWS issued a management decision allowing AM1114 to remain in the wild. The decision was made in consideration of the overall low population numbers of Mexican wolves in the BRWRA and the importance of AM1114 in supporting dependent wild-born pups. By the end of June, a depredation assignment on each of these wolves expired, leaving AM1114 with three depredation incidents and AF903 with a single depredation incident.

On June 19, the IFT discovered two dead bulls and a dead cow in the vicinity of Board Shack Knoll, Arizona. WS personnel investigated the carcasses and determined that the animals died due to range plant poisoning.

## **CAPTIVE MANAGEMENT**

On June 7, the IFT trapped and removed fp1154 from the San Carlos Apache Indian Reservation (SCAIR), and later took it to the Sevilleta Wolf Management Facility (Sevilleta). The IFT trapped this wolf because it became establishing outside the reintroduction project boundary. It is now eligible for translocation within the Project area.

## **COMMUNICATION AND COORDINATION**

On June 5, Chris Bagnoli presented a Mexican Wolf Project overview to 18 advanced science students and five educators from Corona del Sol High School in Tempe, Arizona, on a field trip to Double Cienega on the Alpine Ranger District in Arizona.

On June 6, Chris Bagnoli presented a Project overview to 50 campers at the Big Lake Campground on the Springerville Ranger District in Arizona as part of the Project's summer outreach efforts.

On June 10, Chris Bagnoli presented a Project overview to 21 members of the Arizona Desert Bighorn Sheep Society in Phoenix at their monthly meeting.

On June 13, Chris Bagnoli presented a Project overview to 104 campers at Fool Hollow State Park in Show Low, Arizona, as part of the Project's summer outreach efforts.

On June 19, Paula Capece presented a Project overview to 10 Conservation Corps trail crew members at Big Horn Campground in the Glenwood Ranger District in New Mexico.

On June 24, Jeff Dolphin presented a Project overview, including radio telemetry and wildlife darting demonstrations, to approximately 200 high school students attending a state leadership conference of the Future Farmers of America in Heber, Arizona.

On June 27, Beth Orning-Tschampl presented a Project overview to 49 campers at the Big Lake Campground in the Springerville Ranger District, Arizona, as part of their summer outreach efforts.

### **PROJECT PERSONNEL**

Brittany Oleson joined the Project as a volunteer for the FWS. Welcome to the Project, Brit.

### **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.