



Mexican Wolf Blue Range Reintroduction Project Monthly Update

August 1-31, 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 August 2009, the collared population consisted of 26 wolves with functional radio collars dispersed among 10 packs and three single wolves. Some other uncollared wolves are known to be associating with radio-collared wolves, and others are 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 several months in order to document wild-born pups and estimate their survival. Based on monitoring information from the last 19 weeks, the IFT has determined that the following packs displayed denning behavior and may have produced pups this spring: Hawks Nest, Bluestem, Rim, Bacho, Paradise, Dark Canyon, Middle Fork and San Mateo Packs. The IFT will begin fall trapping in September to document pack status and pup recruitment.

IN ARIZONA:

Bluestem Pack (AM806 and AF1042)

Throughout August, the IFT located AM806 and AF1042 in their traditional territory in the central portion of the ASNF. The IFT observed at least one pup with this pack in July.

Hawks Nest Pack (collared AM1044, AF1110 and mp1155)

During August, the IFT located the Hawks Nest Pack in its traditional territory in the central portion of the ASNF. The IFT documented six pups with this pack in August.

Rim Pack (collared AF858 and AM1107)

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

M619 (collared)

During August, the IFT located M619 in the central portion of the ASNF.

ON THE FAIR:

Paradise Pack (collared AM795 and AF1056)

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

Bacho Pack (collared AM990)

Throughout August, the IFT located AM990 within its traditional territory on the FAIR.

IN NEW MEXICO:

Dark Canyon (collared AM992 and AF923)

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

Luna Pack (collared M1156 and F1115)

Throughout August, the IFT located M1156 in its traditional territory in the central portion of the GNF. During the entire month of August, the IFT documented F1115 as traveling with M1156. The IFT now considers M1156 and F1115 to be paired, and both will be referred to as the Luna Pack.

Middle Fork Pack (collared AM871 and AF861)

Throughout August, the IFT located the Middle Fork Pack within its traditional territory in the central portion of the GNF. The IFT documented at least four pups with this pack in June.

San Mateo Pack (collared AF903 and AM1114)

Throughout August, the IFT located the San Mateo Pack within its traditional territory in the north-central portion of the GNF. At least one pup is known to be with this pack.

Fox Mountain Pack (collared AM1038, AF521, mp1157, mp1158 and mp1161)

Throughout August, the IFT located the Fox Mountain Pack within its traditional territory in the northwestern portion of the GNF and the northeastern portion of the ASNF.

Laredo (collared F1028)

During August, the IFT documented F1028 in the central portions of the GNF.

F1106 (collared)

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

MORTALITIES

The IFT did not document any wolf mortalities during August.

INCIDENTS

In total, the IFT investigated nine potential depredation incidents and one nuisance incident in August. Of the nine depredation incidents, the IFT confirmed seven as wolf depredations. The single nuisance investigation confirmed a wolf was present. The remaining two investigations did not implicate wolves. Summaries of the investigations are as follows:

During the month of August, the IFT assigned six depredation incidents to AF861 and AM871 of the Middle Fork Pack in New Mexico. All of the incidents occurred in the vicinity of Houghton Canyon. The dates and livestock killed are as follows: August 3, yearling steer; August 7, yearling steer; August 22, yearling heifer; August 26, two separate incidents involving yearling heifers; and August 31, yearling steer. On August 28, the FWS issued a management decision

regarding these wolves that called for intensive hazing to be conducted on the Middle Fork Pack with the goal of deterring future livestock depredations and to potentially move the wolves out of the immediate vicinity. The FWS developed this decision with regards to overall low population numbers of Mexican wolves in the BRWRA, presence of pups with the adult wolves, and the genetic importance of the adult members of this pack.

On August 10, IFT personnel located a dead cow in the vicinity of Sierra Blanca Lake in Arizona. WS personnel investigated and determined the cow died as the result of a gunshot.

On August 22, WS personnel investigated a dead calf near Greens Peak in Arizona and determined it was killed by at least two wolves. The IFT assigned the incident to uncollared wolves, and will be placing food caches in the area, on an opportunistic basis, in order to confirm the location of any uncollared wolves. The IFT will initiate trapping efforts to collar any uncollared wolves in the Greens Peak area, based on efforts to locate areas of wolf activity.

On August 26, IFT personnel reported two dead sheep north of Sunrise Lake in Arizona. WS personnel investigated and determined that both sheep died due to natural causes unrelated to predation.

On August 29, IFT personnel investigated a report of a wolf at a camp near Crosby Crossing on the ASNF. The investigation determined that a single wolf, most likely M1155 from the Hawks Nest Pack, was present at the camp for a couple minutes early in the morning before leaving the camp. The campers had two dogs present in the trailer, and they had put up their dog food from the previous night, so the wolf did not receive any food from the camp and no interaction with the dogs occurred.

CAPTIVE MANAGEMENT

No significant activity occurred this month.

COMMUNICATION AND COORDINATION

On August 1, Chris Bagnoli gave a Project overview to 78 people attending the Wildlife Speaker Series conducted throughout the summer at the AGFD Pinetop regional office.

On August 13, Chris Bagnoli gave a Project overview to 21 individuals at the Beaver Creek Guest ranch in Arizona.

On August 15, Chris Bagnoli and Jeff Dolphin gave a Project overview to 15 members of the Heritage Public Advisory Committee at the Sipe White Mountain Wildlife Area in Arizona. After the overview, they led a field trip in the Project area to discuss wolf natural history and management issues.

PROJECT PERSONNEL

Carissa Michaud joined the Project in August as a FWS volunteer. Welcome to the Project,

Carissa!

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.