



Mexican Wolf Blue Range Reintroduction Project Monthly Update

August 1-31, 2010

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 2010, the collared population consisted of 24 wolves with functional radio collars dispersed among ten packs and one single wolf. 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. During the past four months, the IFT has been actively monitoring wolf packs to document wild-born pups and estimate their survival. As of the end of August, the IFT estimates that at least seven packs are exhibiting denning behavior, including Middle Fork, Dark Canyon, Luna, San Mateo, Rim, Hawks Nest and Paradise.

In August, the IFT initiated fall trapping efforts to document pack status and pup recruitment in several packs in the BRWRA. We have successfully trapped and collared two new male pups from the Hawks Nest Pack, mp1208 and mp1209, as a result of these efforts. The IFT will continue efforts to trap and collar other pups from the Hawks Nest, Rim and Paradise Packs in September.

IN ARIZONA:

Bluestem Pack (collared AM806, AF1042 and m1183)

Throughout August, the IFT located the Bluestem Pack in its traditional territory in the central portion of the ASNF and the FAIR.

Hawks Nest Pack (collared AF1110, f1188, mp1208 and mp1209)

During August, the IFT located the Hawks Nest Pack in its traditional summer territory in the north-central portion of the ASNF. The IFT documented the presence of at least six pups this month. An additional uncollared, adult-sized wolf was also documented traveling with this pack.

Rim Pack (collared AF858, AM1107 and f1187)

Throughout August, the IFT located the Rim Pack within its traditional summer range in the central portion of the ASNF. The IFT observed at least one pup with this pack.

M619 (collared)

In August, the IFT failed to locate M619 in the traditional areas of the BRWRA that this wolf normally occupies. The radio collar may have stopped functioning due to its age. This wolf is 11 years old. The IFT has classified this wolf as “fate unknown,” and will no longer be providing information regarding this animal.

ON THE FAIR:

Paradise Pack (collared AF1056)

During August, the IFT located AF1056 within its traditional summer 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 the Luna Pack within its traditional territory in the north-central portion of the GNF. The IFT documented the presence of at least three pups with this pack.

Middle Fork Pack (collared AM871 and AF861)

In August, the IFT located the Middle Fork Pack within its traditional territory in the central portion of the GNF. Toward the end of the month, m1185 returned to the pack. This wolf was a pup that was produced by this pack in 2009, and had been documented traveling on its own for most of the summer.

San Mateo Pack (collared AF903)

The IFT located the San Mateo Pack in its traditional territory in the north-central portion of the GNF during August. The IFT documented the presence of at least three pups with this pack.

Fox Mountain Pack (collared AF521, M1157 and M1158)

During August, the IFT located the Fox Mountain Pack within its traditional territory in the northwestern portion of the GNF. These wolves have been traveling separately, and did not localize in any specific area. However, last month the IFT documented F521 displaying localized behavior near the border of Arizona and New Mexico. This wolf is 13 years old, which is considered to be at an advanced age for a wild wolf.

Morgart's Pack (collared F1106 and M1155)

Throughout August, the IFT located Morgart's Pack in the northeastern portion of the GNF. These two wolves were documented traveling separately toward the end of the month. The IFT will continue to monitor these animals to determine their status as a bonded pair.

m1185 (collared)

During August, the IFT located this wolf traveling through the northern portion of the GNF in New Mexico. Toward the end of the month, m1185 was documented traveling again with the Middle Fork Pack. This wolf is a yearling offspring of AM871 and AF861. It had been traveling alone for most of the summer.

MORTALITIES

The IFT did not document any mortalities during the month of August.

INCIDENTS

The IFT investigated three potential livestock depredation incidents in August. Follow-up investigation by the IFT determined that one of these incidents was wolf-related.

On August 23, IFT personnel located a dead heifer calf at a dirt tank north of Greens Peak on the ASNF. WS personnel investigated the same day, and determined that the calf died of unknown causes not related to a predator.

On August 30, WS personnel investigated a dead cow on State Highway 261 near Big Lake, and determined that the cow died as a result of a vehicle collision.

On August 30, WS personnel investigated a dead bull calf near Lee Valley Reservoir on the ASNF, and confirmed the incident as a wolf depredation. The incident was assigned to an uncollared wolf or wolves.

CAPTIVE MANAGEMENT

During July and August, Sevilleta Wolf Management Facility personnel completed the pup vaccine series for m1200, m1201, f1202, f1203 and f1204. These vaccines consist of routine combination distemper and parvovirus vaccines (DA2PP), as well as a rabies vaccine. The final set of shots was administered on August 30. At the same time, the parents of this litter, M968 and F1064, were given their yearly DA2PP and rabies boosters. This group, along with m1177, is slated for possible release this fall.

COMMUNICATION AND COORDINATION

On August 22, Chris Bagnoli presented a Project overview to ten individuals from the White Mountain Audubon Society at the Beaver Creek Ranch near Alpine, Arizona.

On August 31, Chris Bagnoli, Jeff Dolphin and Beth Wojcik presented a Project overview and a field trip regarding the wolf project to four members of the Arizona State Legislature. The field trip included a meeting with a local livestock producer on the ASNF to discuss proactive livestock management practices and hear her perspective on the reintroduction project in general.

PROJECT PERSONNEL

Annemarie Houser, a biologist with the FWS, left the Project in August after two years of hard work. Thanks, Annemarie, for all of your dedicated efforts!

Tara Poloski, a FWS volunteer with the Project, left the Project in August. Thanks for the hard work, Tara!

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.