



Mexican Wolf Blue Range Reintroduction Project Monthly Update

August 1-31, 2012

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 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 2012, the collared population consisted of 34 wolves with functional radio collars dispersed among 14 packs and one single wolf. The IFT implemented trapping efforts this month, and successfully captured and affixed telemetry collars to four new wolves in three packs. Two new male pups from the Bluestem Pack, mp1275 and mp1277, were captured and collared in Arizona. A yearling male wolf from the Fox Mountain Pack, m1276, and a female pup, fp1278, from the Dark Canyon Pack were captured and collared in New Mexico. Some other uncollared wolves are known to be associating with radio-collared wolves, and others are separate from known packs.

Seasonal note: During the past three months, the IFT has been actively monitoring wolf packs to determine if females are denning in order to document wild-born pups and estimate their survival through the summer. At the end of August, the IFT determined the following packs have produced pups during this year's denning season: Bluestem, Maverick, Fox Mountain, San Mateo, Luna and Dark Canyon. During the upcoming months, the IFT will be actively trapping various packs to capture, collar and document wild-born pups to estimate their survival.

IN ARIZONA:

Bluestem Pack (collared AF1042, m1240, mp1275 and mp1277)

Throughout August, the IFT located these wolves in their traditional territory in the central portion of the ASNF. The IFT trapped and collared two new pups, mp1275 and mp1277, from this pack in August.

Hawks Nest Pack (collared AF1208 and m1244)

In August, these wolves continued to use their traditional territory in the north-central portion of the ASNF. The IFT documented the presence of AM1038 with this pack during August; however, this wolf is not included in this report due to its nonfunctioning radio telemetry collar. The IFT has not yet documented any pups-of-the-year with this pack during the 2012 denning season.

Paradise Pack (collared AM795, AF1056, m1243 and m1245)

In August, these wolves were documented using the summer range of their territory on the northern portion of the ASNF and the FAIR. This month, the IFT documented wolf m1245 traveling with the other pack members within the traditional territory for this pack.

Rim Pack (collared AM1107 and AF858)

Throughout August, the IFT located the Rim Pack utilizing its traditional summer range in the south-central portion of the ASNF.

ON THE FAIR:

Maverick Pack (collared AM1183)

During early August, the IFT located this wolf on the FAIR. Later in the month, this wolf was located in the west-central portion of the ASNF.

Tsay o Ah Pack (collared AM1253 and m1254)

During August, the IFT located these wolves on the FAIR.

IN NEW MEXICO:

Canyon Creek Pack (collared M1248 and F1246)

In August, the IFT located these wolves traveling together in the central portion of the GNF.

Dark Canyon Pack (collared AM992, AF923, f1251 and fp1278)

Throughout August, the IFT located the Dark Canyon Pack within its traditional territory in the west-central portion of the GNF. The IFT trapped and collared fp1278, a new pup-of-the-year, this month.

Elk Horn Pack (collared F1212)

During August, the IFT located this wolf traveling in the northwest and north-central portion of the GNF.

Fox Mountain Pack (collared M1158, F1188 and m1276)

Throughout August, the IFT documented these wolves in the northwest portion of the GNF. This month, IFT personnel trapped and captured m1276, a yearling male wolf from this pack.

Luna Pack (collared AF1115 and AM1155)

In August, the IFT located the Luna Pack within its traditional territory in the north-central portion of the GNF. IFT personnel confirmed the presence of pups with this pack.

Middle Fork Pack (collared AM871 and AF861)

Throughout August, the IFT located these wolves within their traditional territory in the central portion of the GNF, including the Gila Wilderness.

San Mateo Pack (collared AM1157, AF903 and m1249)

During August, the IFT located these wolves in the traditional San Mateo Pack territory in the north-central portion of the GNF. IFT personnel confirmed the presence of pups with this pack.

Willow Springs Pack (collared M1185)

Throughout August, the IFT located this wolf in the north-central portion of the GNF.

M1252 (collared)

The IFT located this wolf in mid-August traveling through the central portion of the GNF.

MORTALITIES

No wolf mortalities were documented during the month of August.

INCIDENTS

During August, IFT personnel investigated six livestock depredation incidents in the BRWRA.

On August 1, WS personnel investigated a dead calf on private property in the vicinity of Jones Peak in New Mexico. The incident was determined to be a wolf depredation, and it was assigned to the Fox Mountain Pack. This was the fourth depredation incident assigned to this pack since March 2012. FWS issued a lethal removal order for AF1188 on August 8. This order was changed to a nonlethal removal method on August 10 after FWS deliberations with the Mexican wolf captive management community determined that a facility in Arizona would be willing to house AF1188 after the wolf was captured. As of the end of August, this wolf has not been captured.

On August 1, WS personnel investigated a dead calf west of Greens Peak in Arizona. The incident was determined to be a domestic dog depredation.

On August 4, WS personnel investigated a dead cow in the vicinity of Deep Creek on the GNF. The cause of death was determined to be a black bear depredation.

On August 5, WS personnel investigated a dead cow in the vicinity of Deep Creek on the GNF. The cause of death was determined to be a black bear depredation.

On August 8, WS personnel investigated a dead cow in the vicinity of Mangitas Flat on the GNF. The cause of death was unknown.

On August 9, WS personnel investigated a dead calf in the vicinity of Lee Valley Reservoir on the ASNF. The incident was determined to be a wolf depredation, and the incident was assigned to an uncollared wolf.

CAPTIVE MANAGEMENT

On August 7, at the Ladder Ranch Wolf Management Facility, Project personnel captured M919 and M921 and moved them to the Living Desert Zoo and Gardens State Park in Carlsbad, New Mexico. This move is temporary in order to facilitate needed maintenance at the Ladder Ranch facility.

On August 27, at the Sevilleta Wolf Management Facility, Project personnel captured M1049 and transferred the wolf to the California Wolf Center in Julian, California.

On August 31, at the Sevilleta Wolf Management Facility, Project personnel captured M1043, F1055, F1032 and F1033 for health evaluations and vaccinations.

COMMUNICATION AND COORDINATION

On August 4, IFT personnel presented a Project update to 12 individuals at the Southwest Wings Nature Festival in Sierra Vista, Arizona.

Project personnel conducted a variety of contacts with recreationists in Arizona and New Mexico during the course of regular field duties.

During August, IFT personnel coordinated with several livestock producers regarding proactive management of several wolf packs in the BRWRA, including Paradise, Hawks Nest, Bluestem, Fox Mountain, Elk Horn, Luna and Middle Fork Packs.

PROJECT PERSONNEL

No significant activity occurred this month.

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.