



## Mexican Wolf Blue Range Reintroduction Project Monthly Update

August 1-31, 2013

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 breeding 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 2013, the collared population consisted of 43 wolves with functional radio collars dispersed among 13 packs and four single wolves.

### **IN ARIZONA:**

#### **Bluestem Pack (collared AF1042, m1275, f1280 and f1289)**

Throughout August, the IFT located these wolves in their traditional territory in the east-central portion of the ASNF. On August 18, the IFT set a trap line to collar the breeding male and pups of the year. Shortly after initiating trapping efforts, f1289 was caught, but subsequently died during processing. A necropsy is being performed to determine the cause of death. On August 28, m1275 was trapped and fitted with a new telemetry collar.

#### **Elk Horn Pack (collared AM1287 and F1294)**

In August, the IFT located these wolves traveling in the northeast portion of the ASNF in Arizona.

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

In August, the IFT located AM795 and AF1056 using their traditional territory in the northern portion of the ASNF and the FAIR. The IFT has no evidence the Paradise Pack produced pups this year. On August 19, WS personnel investigated a dead calf and confirmed it as being killed by wolves, assigning the depredation to the Paradise Pack. On August 27, WS investigated another dead calf and confirmed it as being killed by wolves, again assigning the depredation to the Paradise Pack.

#### **Rim (collared AM1107 and f1305)**

During August, AM1107 and f1305 continued to utilize the south-central portion of the ASNF and the SCAR. Note that this pair will now be included in the overall pack summary above since they have been documented together for at least three months.

### **ON THE FAIR:**

#### **Maverick Pack (collared m1290 and f1291)**

During August, the IFT located m1290 and f1291 on the FAIR and on the west-central portion of the ASNF.

#### **Tsay-o-Ah Pack (collared AM1253 and f1283)**

During August, the IFT located AM1253 and f1283 on the FAIR. On August 2, WS investigated a dead calf and an injured calf north of Lee Valley Reservoir in Arizona. The depredation was assigned to the Tsay-o-Ah Pack. This marks the first time the Tsay-o-Ah Pack had been located off of the FAIR.

## **IN NEW MEXICO:**

### **Canyon Creek Pack (collared M1252 and F1246)**

In August, these wolves were located traveling together in the central portion of the GNF. The IFT has not documented any pups with this pack this year.

### **Dark Canyon Pack (collared AM992, AF923, M1293 and f1278)**

Throughout August, the IFT located this pack within its traditional territory in the west-central portion of the GNF. Yearling f1278 has continued to travel with single wolf M1244 in the west-central portion of the GNF this month.

### **Fox Mountain Pack (collared AM1158, AF1212, M1276, m1274, f1281 and f1295)**

During August, the IFT located these wolves in the northwest portion of the GNF. The IFT has maintained a food cache for this pack to help alleviate any depredation issues. Throughout August, f1281 and f1295 were consistently located separate from the rest of the collared wolves in the Fox Mountain Pack. On August 3, the IFT documented five pups with this pack by trail camera. On August 6, WS personnel investigated an injured calf in New Mexico that was later euthanized. The incident was assigned to members of the Fox Mountain Pack.

### **Luna Pack (collared AM1155, AF1115, m1284, m1285 and m1286)**

In August, the IFT located these wolves in the north-central portion of the GNF. The IFT has confirmed the Luna Pack produced pups this year. In August, the IFT documented pup tracks with adult tracks in the Luna territory.

### **Prieto Pack (collared F1251)**

Throughout August, the IFT located this wolf in the north-central portion of the GNF. The IFT continues to document the presence of an uncollared wolf traveling with F1251. The IFT has maintained a food cache for the pack and continues to observe the pack in order to confirm pups.

### **San Mateo Pack (collared AM1157, AF903, M1249, m1282 and f1327)**

In August, the San Mateo Pack continued to use its traditional territory in the northern portion of the GNF. In August, the IFT noted AF903's telemetry collar was not working properly. The collar has since stopped functioning. Wolf f1327 has been located periodically with the San Mateo Pack since being collared in July. Wolves M1249 and m1282 were located traveling with AM1157 throughout August.

### **Willow Springs Pack (collared M1185, F1279 and mp1329)**

On August 7, the IFT obtained a visual observation of the Willow Springs Pack and counted six pups. During August, the IFT initiated trapping efforts to collar pups-of-the-year with this pack, and on August 23, trapped a male pup. The wolf was assigned stud book number mp1329, collared and released on site. Throughout August, these wolves were located in the north-central portion of the GNF.

### **M1240 (collared)**

Throughout August, the IFT located M1240 primarily in the central portion of the GNF.

**M1244 (collared)**

In August, the IFT located this wolf traveling in the central portion of the GNF, north of the Gila Wilderness. M1244 has been located traveling with f1278 from the Dark Canyon Pack in August.

**m1277 (collared)**

During August, the IFT located m1277 separate from its natal pack and now considers it a single wolf. Throughout August, m1277 has traveled the northeastern portion of the GNF, as well as traveling to the San Mateo Mountains on the Cibola National Forest.

**M1296 (collared)**

During August, the IFT located M1296 traveling to the San Mateo Mountains on the Cibola National Forest. This wolf has also been located north of the GNF.

**MORTALITIES**

On August 18, the IFT captured Bluestem Pack f1289 in order to replace its telemetry collar. The wolf died while being processed. A necropsy is being performed to determine the cause of death.

**Halfmoon Pack AF1108 Update**

Following translocation in the Gila Wilderness in New Mexico, AF1108 localized in the vicinity of McKenna Park, indicating denning behavior. After AF1108 was shot, the necropsy performed as part of the investigation confirmed it had been pregnant during the spring. The IFT believes that pups were born soon after AF1108 self-released from its acclimation pen. The IFT provided supplemental food during this period to assist the wolf in raising any surviving pups. AF1108 remained localized for several weeks, although the IFT did not observe any pups at this time.

AF1108 dispersed from the area on June 10, 2013, and did not return. If AF1108 did have pups, it appears most likely that they died prior to the female's dispersal. It is highly doubtful any pups could have survived for more than several days after the female's departure. Approximately two weeks later, AF1108 was killed by gunshot on private land outside of the Gila Wilderness.

The shooting was investigated by FWS, New Mexico Department of Game and Fish, and WS personnel. The investigation found evidence of wolf bite marks on a cow, and that the attack on the cow occurred on private lands. After a comprehensive and thorough investigation was completed, the FWS Office of Law Enforcement concluded that the take of wolf AF1108 on private land was legal under the provisions of the Experimental Population Rule, and therefore, not a violation of the Endangered Species Act.

**INCIDENTS**

During August, WS personnel investigated nine livestock depredation incidents and one nuisance report in the BRWRA.

On August 2, WS investigated one dead calf and one injured calf north of Lee Valley Reservoir in Arizona. They confirmed both the depredation and injury to have been caused by wolves and assigned them to the Tsay-o-Ah Pack.

On August 6, WS investigated a dead calf in New Mexico and confirmed it as a wolf kill. The depredation was assigned to members of the Fox Mountain Pack.

On August 7, WS investigated a dead cow in New Mexico and determined the cow died while giving birth.

On August 11, WS investigated a dead cow near Pole Knoll in Arizona and determined the cow was killed by lightning.

On August 19, WS investigated a dead calf near Greens Peak in Arizona and confirmed it as a wolf kill. The incident was assigned to the Paradise Pack.

On August 22, WS investigated a report of a dog attacked by a wolf near Aragon, New Mexico. The incident was confirmed to have been caused by wolves.

On August 26, WS investigated a dead calf in Arizona near Bee Hive Springs and confirmed it as a wolf kill. The depredation was assigned to uncollared wolves.

On August 26, WS investigated a dead calf east of SU cabin in Arizona and confirmed it as a wolf kill. The depredation was assigned to uncollared wolves.

On August 27, WS investigated another dead calf near Bee Hive Springs and confirmed it as a wolf kill. The depredation was assigned to the Paradise Pack.

On August 28, WS investigated a different dead calf near Bee Hive Springs and confirmed it as a wolf kill. The depredation was assigned to uncollared wolves.

### **CAPTIVE MANAGEMENT**

On August 24, project personnel transferred two Mexican wolves from the Sevilleta Wolf Management Facility (Sevilleta) to the California Wolf Center, and received one wolf from the California Center.

On August 24, project personnel transferred two Mexican wolves from Sevilleta to the Southwest Wildlife Conservation Center, and received one wolf from the Southwest Center.

### **COMMUNICATION AND COORDINATION**

On August 10, the IFT gave a presentation on the Mexican wolf reintroduction project to 75 campers at Show Low Lake in Arizona.

On August 16 and 17, the IFT and other agency personnel attended an annual chemical immobilization training class.

On August 31, the IFT gave a presentation on the Mexican wolf reintroduction project to 35 students from the University of Arizona at the Sipe Wildlife Area located in Arizona.

### **PROJECT PERSONNEL**

The Fish and Wildlife Service is currently reorganizing several positions within the Mexican Wolf Recovery Program.

During August, Liz Jozwiak, former FWS Field Projects Coordinator, moved to a position focusing on Mexican wolf policy issues and budget administration.

During August, John Oakleaf, FWS Senior Wolf Biologist, moved into the Field Projects Coordinator position and will be responsible for administering FWS field activities in the BRWRA. Contact John at (928) 245-1910 for questions or concerns regarding Mexican wolves in the wild.

During August, Tracy Melbihess moved to a position as the lead in development of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the 10(j) rule. Contact Tracy at (208) 258-0253 for questions or concerns regarding the Mexican wolf EIS process.

During August, David Carrasco was hired as a WS specialist.

### **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.