



## Mexican Wolf Blue Range Reintroduction Project Monthly Update

September 1 - 30, 2008

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 die, 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 September 2008, the collared population consisted of 27 wolves with functional radio collars dispersed among 12 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: In September 2008, the IFT initiated fall trapping efforts to document pack status and pup recruitment in the BRWRA. We have trapped and collared four new wolf pups from the following established packs: male pup (mp1155) is associated with the Hawks Nest Pack; two male pups (mp1157 and mp1158) are associated with the Fox Mountain Pack; and male pup (mp1159) is associated with the Rim Pack. We also trapped and collared an adult male wolf (M1156) that is associated with the Luna Pack. We will be initiating trapping efforts on the remaining two wolf packs that we believe have pups from this year, the Dark Canyon and Middle Fork Packs in New Mexico. Our other trapping priorities are areas with uncollared wolf sign in Arizona and New Mexico. The status of pup recruitment is unknown for the San Mateo, Bluestem, Lofer and Luna Packs.

### **IN ARIZONA:**

#### **Bluestem Pack (collared AF521, AM806 and F1042)**

Throughout September, the IFT located the Bluestem Pack in its traditional territory on the ASNF and the FAIR.

#### **Hawks Nest Pack (collared M1044, AF1110 and mp1155)**

Throughout September, the IFT located the Hawks Nest Pack in its traditional territory on the ASNF. The IFT trapped and collared one male pup associated with this pack in September, and assigned it identification number mp1155.

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

Throughout September, AM795 continued to be located within the Paradise Pack's traditional territory on the ASNF and the FAIR. The IFT has not documented any wolves with AM795 since July.

#### **Rim Pack (collared AF858, AM1107 and mp1159)**

Throughout September, the IFT located the Rim Pack within its traditional home range in the central portion of the ASNF. The IFT trapped and collared one male pup associated with this pack in September, and assigned it identification number mp1159.

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

The IFT located M619 in the central portion of the ASNF during September.

### **ON THE FAIR:**

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

Throughout September, the IFT located the Bacho Pack on the FAIR.

#### **Lofer Pack (collared AF1056)**

Throughout September, the IFT located the Lofer Pack on the FAIR.

## **IN NEW MEXICO:**

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

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

### **Laredo Pack (collared AF1028)**

Throughout September, the IFT located AF1028 in the Gila Wilderness on the GNF. The IFT has not documented any new wolves with AF1028 since last month.

### **Luna Pack (collared F1118 and M1156)**

Throughout September, the IFT located the Luna Pack in its traditional territory in the west-central portion of the GNF. The IFT trapped and collared one adult male wolf associated with this pack in September, and assigned it identification number M1156.

### **Middle Fork Pack (collared AM871, AF861 and F1115)**

Throughout September, the IFT located the Middle Fork Pack on and adjacent to the northern portion of the Gila Wilderness and central portion of the GNF.

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

Throughout September, the IFT located the San Mateo Pack in the north-central portion of the GNF.

### **Fox Mountain Pack (collared AM1038, mp1157 and mp1158)**

Throughout September, the IFT located the Fox Mountain Pack in the northwestern portion of the ASNF and the western portion of the GNF. The IFT trapped and collared two male pups associated with this pack in September. The IFT assigned the pups identification numbers mp1157 and mp1158.

## **MORTALITIES**

No wolf mortalities were documented in September.

## **INCIDENTS**

In total, the IFT investigated five potential depredation incidents in September. Of the five, the IFT confirmed four as wolf depredations and the fifth was determined to be the result of a vehicle collision. Summaries of the investigations are as follows:

On September 8, the IFT investigated a dead calf near the junction of Forest Roads (FR) 93 and 13 in New Mexico. Wildlife Services (WS) personnel estimated the calf died on or around September 3. The IFT confirmed the incident as a wolf depredation and assigned it to AM1114. This is the third depredation incident assigned to AM1114 in the previous 365 days.

On September 8, the IFT investigated a dead calf near Indio Canyon Tank in New Mexico. WS personnel estimated the calf died 12 hours prior to its discovery by the IFT and confirmed it as a wolf depredation. The IFT assigned this incident to AM1114 also. This is the fourth depredation incident assigned to AM1114. The USFWS issued a removal order on September

12 authorizing the immediate translocation of M1114 into the Gila Wilderness. If, following translocation, M1114 returns to its prior home range where the depredation incidents occurred, it will be immediately removed.

On September 11, the IFT investigated a dead cow near the Campbell Blue River in Arizona. WS personnel estimated the cow died on or around September 7. The IFT confirmed the incident as a wolf depredation and assigned it to the Bluestem Pack. This is the first incident assigned to this pack in the previous 365 days.

On September 11, the IFT investigated a dead cow near the T Bar grasslands in New Mexico. WS personnel estimated the animal died seven to 10 days prior to September 11. The IFT confirmed the incident as a wolf depredation. No collared wolves were located near the carcass, and the incident was assigned to an uncollared wolf or wolves.

On September 6, the IFT investigated a dead cow near Rudd Knoll, Arizona, and determined the cause of death to be the result a vehicle collision.

### **CAPTIVE MANAGEMENT**

No significant captive management activities occurred in September.

### **COMMUNICATION AND COORDINATION**

The IFT continued to communicate and coordinate with members of the public and livestock operators. On September 4, John Oakleaf and Jeff Dolphin presented an overview of project objectives and activities to 12 students and two instructors from Prescott College who were visiting the area to learn more about Mexican wolf issues.

On September 13, Chris Bagnoli presented an overview of Project objectives and activities, including wolf identification, to 57 members of the TRACKS hiking club based in Pinetop-Lakeside at Woodland Lake in Pinetop, AZ.

On September 15, IFT personnel presented a summary of proposed initial releases and translocations of Mexican wolves into the BRWRA in 2008 and 2009 to 19 members of the public at the Alpine Community Center in Alpine, AZ.

### **PROJECT PERSONNEL**

No significant personnel changes in the IFT staffing occurred in September.

### **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, AZ, at (480) 967-7900, in Alpine, AZ, at (928) 339-4232, or in Albuquerque, NM, 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.