



Mexican Wolf Blue Range Reintroduction Project Monthly Update

September 1-30, 2011

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), 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 September 2011, the collared population consisted of 31 wolves with functional radio collars dispersed among ten packs and four single wolves. Some other uncollared wolves are known to be associating with radio-collared wolves, and others are separate from known packs.

Seasonal note: In September, the IFT continued fall trapping efforts to document pack status and pup recruitment in several packs in the BRWRA. The IFT captured four new pups of the year and one yearling wolf this month, including mp1243 and mp1245 from the Paradise Pack, mp1244 and fp1247 from the Hawks Nest Pack, and F1246 from the Luna Pack. IFT personnel also recaptured mp1241 from the Luna Pack in September. The IFT will continue efforts to trap and collar wolves from the Hawks Nest, Paradise and San Mateo Packs in October.

IN ARIZONA:

Bluestem Pack (collared AM806, AF1042, mp1240 and mp1242)

Throughout September, the IFT located these wolves in their traditional territory in the central portion of the ASNF.

Hawks Nest Pack (collared M1038, f1208, mp1244 and fp1247)

In September, these wolves continued to use their traditional territory in the north-central portion of the ASNF. The IFT also documented the presence of M1038 with this pack in September. This wolf was the breeding male of the Fox Mountain Pack ranging along the border of Arizona and New Mexico in 2008. This wolf's telemetry signal was last recorded on the GNF in December 2009. Its telemetry collar is currently only transmitting a very faint signal. The IFT is not certain this wolf is the breeding male that produced the current litter of pups; however, blood samples from mp1244 and fp1247 will be sent for analysis to determine the parental heritage for these pups utilizing previous blood samples collected from M1038 and AF1110. The IFT documented at least one other adult-sized, uncollared wolf and three pups with this pack this month.

Rim Pack (collared AM1107, AF858 and F1213)

Throughout September, the IFT located the Rim Pack utilizing its summer range on the central portion of the ASNF. The IFT located F1187 dead this month within the traditional pack territory. The IFT has been unable to document the presence of any pups with this pack this month.

Paradise Pack (collared AM795, mp1243 and mp1245)

In September, these wolves utilized the traditional summer range of their territory on the northern portion of the ASNF.

ON THE FAIR:

M1183 (collared)

During September, the IFT located this wolf on the FAIR.

IN NEW MEXICO:

Dark Canyon (collared AM992 and AF923)

Throughout September, the IFT located the Dark Canyon Pack within its traditional territory in the west-central portion of the GNF. The IFT has been unable to document the presence of any pups with this pack this month.

Fox Mountain Pack (collared M1158 and F1188)

Throughout September, the IFT documented these wolves together in the northwest portion of the GNF. The IFT has been unable to document the presence of any pups with this pack this month.

Luna Pack (collared AF1115, F1246 and mp1241)

In September, the IFT located the Luna Pack within its traditional territory in the north-central portion of the GNF.

Middle Fork Pack (collared AM871 and AF861)

In September, the IFT located AM871 and AF861 within their traditional territory in the central portion of the GNF.

Morgart's Pack (collared M1155)

Throughout September, the IFT documented this wolf traveling through the central portion of the GNF.

San Mateo Pack (collared AM1157, AF903 and f1212)

During September, the IFT located these wolves in the traditional San Mateo Pack territory in the north-central portion of the GNF.

M1185 (collared)

Throughout September, the IFT located this wolf in the north-central portion of the GNF. The IFT confirmed the presence of another single wolf traveling with M1185 this month.

F1105 (collared)

At the end of September, the IFT located this wolf in the central portion of the GNF. The IFT continued efforts to document the presence of the one remaining hybrid pup which this wolf produced this past spring; however, no evidence of the presence of the pup has been found.

f1211 (collared)

During September, the IFT documented this wolf traveling widely through the north-central portion of the GNF.

MORTALITIES

During September, the IFT located F1187 from the Rim Pack dead within the traditional territory for this pack on the ASNF in Arizona. The death is under investigation.

On September 28, two individuals in unrelated cases appeared in federal court in the District of New Mexico and pled guilty to violations of the Endangered Species Act stemming from the illegal shooting of Mexican wolves F521 and F1154 in 2010.

INCIDENTS

During September, IFT personnel investigated six livestock depredation incidents in the BRWRA and determined that one involved Mexican wolves. An additional depredation incident was reported and investigated by non-WS personnel; the status of that incident is pending.

On September 1, WS personnel investigated a report of an injured yearling heifer in the vicinity of Cooney Point on the GNF. The yearling was euthanized as a result of its injuries. The incident was confirmed as a wolf depredation. A decision regarding the wolf or wolves responsible is pending from the FWS.

On September 5, WS personnel investigated four adult cow carcasses near Ghost Lake on the GNF. They determined the cause of death was not wolf-related, but was most likely due to noxious weed ingestion.

On September 6, WS personnel investigated a steer carcass in the vicinity of High Clark Canyon near the Arizona and New Mexico border on the GNF. The cause of death was undetermined.

On September 20, WS personnel investigated the remains of a dead calf near Bear Canyon on the ASNF. They determined the cause of death to be from a black bear.

On September 21, IFT personnel located two more cow carcasses from the same vicinity as the four cows investigated on September 5 near Ghost Lake. They reported the carcasses to the owner of the livestock. The cause of death was assumed to be noxious weed ingestion.

On September 21, non-Project personnel conducted an investigation of a dead yearling in the vicinity of Collins Park on the GNF. The cause of death has not yet been determined nor confirmed by WS and FWS personnel.

On September 23, WS personnel investigated a dead bull near Cerro Montosa just outside of the ASNF in Arizona. They determined the cause of death to be the result of a lightning strike.

CAPTIVE MANAGEMENT

On September 20, Project personnel captured M1130, M1133 and F1108 at the Ladder Ranch Wolf Management Facility, and moved them to the Sevilleta Wolf Management Facility.

COMMUNICATION AND COORDINATION

On September 9, Chris Bagnoli met with a student from Tempe High School regarding Mexican wolf management issues.

On September 10, Melissa Kreutzian and Susan Dicks presented educational materials and Project outreach information at the Bitter Lake National Wildlife Refuge's Dragonfly Festival.

PROJECT PERSONNEL

Kyle Crowson, a FWS intern, left the Project this month. Many thanks, Kyle, for your hard work on the Project this summer!

Adair McNear joined the Project as a FWS intern this month. Welcome, Adair!

Rob Wise joined the Project as a FWS intern this month. Welcome to the Project, Rob!

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.