



Mexican Wolf Blue Range Reintroduction Project Monthly Update

October 1-31, 2009

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 October 2009, the collared population consisted of 29 wolves with functional radio collars dispersed among nine packs and three single wolves. Some other uncollared wolves are known to be associating with radio-collared wolves, and others are separate from known packs.

On October 3, the IFT located F1028 deceased in the vicinity of the Negrito Airstrip on the GNF in New Mexico. The IFT collected the carcass, and the wolf's death is under investigation.

On October 13, the IFT located fp1186 from the Rim Pack deceased in the vicinity of Reno Lookout on the ASNF in Arizona. The IFT collected the carcass, and the wolf's death is under investigation.

Seasonal note: In October 2009, the IFT continued fall trapping efforts to document pack status and pup recruitment in the BRWRA. We trapped and collared two new wolf pups; fp1187 from the Rim Pack in Arizona and fp1188 from the Hawks Nest Pack in Arizona.

IN ARIZONA:

Bluestem Pack (AM806, AF1042 and mp1183)

Throughout October, the IFT located AM806 and AF1042 in their traditional territory in the central portion of the ASNF. The IFT observed at least four pups with this pack in September.

Hawks Nest Pack (collared AM1044, AF1110, M1155 and fp1188)

During October, the IFT located the Hawks Nest Pack in its traditional territory in the central portion of the ASNF. The IFT trapped a Hawks Nest pup, fitted it with a radio collar, and assigned it studbook number fp1188.

Rim Pack (collared AF858, AM1107 and fp1187)

Throughout October, the IFT located the Rim Pack within its traditional home range in the central portion of the ASNF. The IFT found pup fp1186 deceased. The wolf's death is under investigation. The IFT trapped a second pup, fitted it with a radio collar, and assigned it studbook number fp1187.

M619 (collared)

In October, the IFT located M619 in the central portion of the ASNF.

ON THE FAIR:

Paradise Pack (collared AM795 and AF1056)

During October, the IFT located the Paradise Pack within its traditional territory on the northern portion of the FAIR and the northwestern portion of the ASNF.

Bacho Pack (collared AM990)

In October, the IFT located AM990 within its traditional territory on the FAIR and in nontraditional areas on the central portion of the ASNF in Arizona. This wolf began traveling outside of its normal territory on the FAIR in October. The IFT obtained a visual observation on the wolf, and confirmed it was traveling alone. Because it is alone, it will now be referenced as a single wolf and will no longer be considered a “pack.” The wolf will keep its original pack name for future reference.

IN NEW MEXICO:

Dark Canyon (collared AM992 and AF923)

Throughout October, the IFT located the Dark Canyon Pack within its traditional territory in the west-central portion of the GNF. The IFT documented at least two pups with this pack in September.

Luna Pack (collared M1156 and F1115)

Throughout October, the IFT located M1156 and F1115 in the traditional Luna territory in the central portion of the GNF.

Middle Fork Pack (collared AM871, AF861 and mp1185)

Throughout October, the IFT located the Middle Fork Pack within its traditional territory in the central portion of the GNF. The IFT documented four pups with the Middle Fork Pack in October.

San Mateo Pack (collared AF903 and AM1114)

Throughout October, the IFT located the San Mateo Pack within its traditional territory in the north-central portion of the GNF. At least one pup is known to be with this pack.

Fox Mountain Pack (collared AM1038, AF521, M1157, M1158 and M1161)

Throughout October, the IFT located the Fox Mountain Pack within its traditional territory in the northwestern portion of the GNF.

Laredo (collared F1028)

In October, the IFT documented the mortality of F1028 on the GNF. This wolf’s death is currently under investigation.

F1106 (collared)

During October, the IFT located F1106 in the northwestern and north-central portions of the GNF.

MORTALITIES

The IFT documented two wolf mortalities in October. F1028 was found dead on October 3, and recently-collared fp1186 from the Rim Pack was found dead on October 13. Both deaths are under investigation.

INCIDENTS

In total, the IFT investigated two potential depredation incidents in October. The IFT investigation confirmed the first as not being caused by a wolf. The other was confirmed as a wolf-related depredation. Summaries of the investigations are as follows:

On October 2, the IFT investigated a report of a dead yearling steer in the Negrito area of the GNF in New Mexico. The yearling died from unknown causes that were not wolf-related.

On October 27, the IFT investigated a report of a dead, two-year-old heifer on private land within the Fox Mountain Pack territory. The IFT confirmed this as a wolf depredation incident likely involving one or two wolves. The IFT did not issue a depredation incident assignment to a specific wolf or wolves because the investigation did not reveal evidence to implicate specific individuals from the five-member Fox Mountain Pack.

CAPTIVE MANAGEMENT

During October, Sevilleta Wolf Management Facility personnel performed annual exams on nine wolves housed at both the Sevilleta and Ladder Ranch Wolf Management Facilities. Annual exams include a brief veterinary exam for overall health, as well as the administration of vaccines. Additionally, due to limited space at the Sevilleta and Ladder Ranch facilities and the inability to separate males and females during the breeding season, personnel administered Deslorelin to one female. Deslorelin is a drug that induces ovulation in the female prior to when male wolves are fertile, thus preventing breeding and allowing the pack to remain together during the breeding season.

On October 28, Sevilleta personnel found mp1176 dead in its pen. The cause of death is unknown, and necropsy results are pending.

COMMUNICATION AND COORDINATION

On October 4, Chris Bagnoli met with 15 volunteers at the Big Sheep Pen adjacent to Highway 260 in Arizona to discuss the Project and remove fladry from the pen installed the prior spring around the sheep holding pastures.

On October 9, Chris Bagnoli presented a Project overview to a meeting of the World President's Organization at the Hidden Meadow Resort near Greer, Arizona.

On October 15, the IFT conducted a public meeting to gather comments on a proposed initial release in Arizona at the Engineer Springs release pen in the summer of 2010. Four members of

the public attended the meeting.

On October 17, Melissa Kreutzian presented an overview of the Mexican Wolf Reintroduction Project to 15 attendees at the Sevilleta National Wildlife Refuge Open House.

On October 17, Chris Bagnoli and John Oakleaf presented a Project overview, including an introduction to trapping methods and wolf howling surveys, to 13 wildlife management students and four instructors from the University of Arizona.

The IFT has been conducting opportunistic hunter contacts in New Mexico and Arizona during the current elk and deer hunt seasons.

PROJECT PERSONNEL

John Oakleaf from the FWS accepted a position in the Service's Albuquerque Office assisting with the ongoing Mexican wolf recovery planning efforts in the BRWRA. John has been the Field Projects Coordinator on the IFT at the Alpine field office in Arizona since 2003. Needless to say, his knowledge and support will be greatly missed. Thanks for all of your hard work over the years, John!

Two FWS Project volunteers, Becky Carter and Julie Golla, left the Project in October. Many thanks to Becky and Julie for all of your hard work the past few months!

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.