



## **Mexican Wolf Blue Range Reintroduction Project Monthly Update**

October 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 October 2013, the collared population consisted of 48 wolves with functional radio collars dispersed among 13 packs and seven single wolves.

The USFWS issued a removal order in September for the Paradise Pack for four confirmed livestock depredations within 70 days. On October 22, the IFT captured AM795 with the aid of a helicopter and removed the wolf to a captive facility in New Mexico. The IFT will continue efforts to capture AF1056.

The USFWS also issued a removal order for any uncollared male wolf in the Fox Mountain Pack for multiple livestock depredations. In October, the IFT initiated trapping efforts to fulfill this order, but was unsuccessful. The IFT will continue to trap for an uncollared male wolf in the Fox Mountain Pack in November.

### **IN ARIZONA:**

#### **Bluestem Pack (collared AF1042, m1275, f1280, mp1330, mp1331, fp1332 and fp1333)**

In October, the Bluestem Pack continued to use their traditional territory in the central portion of the ASNF. The IFT observed several members of the Bluestem Pack in late October. From the information the IFT has collected in recent months, they estimate the Bluestem Pack numbers at least ten wolves.

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

In October, the IFT located this pack traveling in the northeast portion of the ASNF in Arizona.

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

The IFT located AM795 and AF1056 traveling separately in October. M1249 from the San Mateo Pack has replaced AM795 and has been located with AF1056 throughout October. On October 22, the IFT captured AM795 with the aid of a helicopter and removed the wolf to a captive facility in New Mexico. It was captured per a USFWS removal order for depredating four calves in 70 days. The IFT attempted to capture AF1056 on October 23, but was unsuccessful. The same day, the IFT captured M1249 and affixed a new GPS collar on the wolf, then released it on site. AF1056 and M1249 continue to travel within the traditional Paradise Pack territory in the northern portion of the ASNF.

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

Throughout October, the IFT located AM1107 and f1305 using the south-central portion of the ASNF and the SCAR.

#### **Maverick Pack (collared m1290, f1291, f1335 and mp1336)**

In October, the IFT set traps to collar wolves in the Maverick Pack. On October 12, they

captured a female wolf, affixed a telemetry collar, designated it f1335, and released it on site. On October 23, the IFT captured a male pup with the pack using a helicopter. The wolf was designated mp1336 and released on site. During helicopter operations in October, the IFT was able to count seven wolves in the Maverick Pack. Throughout the month, the Maverick Pack has traveled in the west-central portion of the ASNF and the FAIR.

#### **ON THE FAIR:**

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

During October, the IFT located AM1253 and f1283 on the FAIR.

#### **IN NEW MEXICO:**

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

In October, these wolves were located traveling together in the central portion of the GNF.

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

Throughout October, the IFT located this pack within its traditional territory in the west-central portion of the GNF. The IFT consistently found f1278 separate from the Dark Canyon Pack, traveling with M1244 throughout the month.

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

During October, the IFT documented these wolves in the northwest portion of the GNF, occasionally roaming outside of their traditional territory. The IFT continues to trap for an uncollared male wolf in the Fox Mountain Pack to fulfill the intent of the permanent removal issued by the USFWS.

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

In October, the IFT located these wolves in the north-central portion of the GNF. On October 15, the IFT found the three juvenile males separate from the rest of the pack. At the end of the month, m1284 was back with the alpha wolves in this pack. Juveniles m1285 and m1286 were located separate from the pack at the end of October.

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

Throughout October, the IFT located this wolf in the north-central portion of the GNF. An uncollared wolf is still being documented with F1251 on trail cameras. The IFT is maintaining a food cache for the wolves to alleviate potential depredation issues.

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

In October, the San Mateo Pack was in their traditional territory in the northern portion of the GNF. The IFT is attempting to trap and replace failing collars on AM1157 and AF903. M1249 was located in Arizona at the beginning of October. M1249 has replaced AM795 of the Paradise Pack and has been traveling with Paradise female AF1056. f1327 has been located traveling with the San Mateo Pack in October.

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

In October, the IFT located these wolves in the north-central portion of the GNF. Throughout October, the IFT located mp1329 separate from the Willow Springs Pack. On October 27, mp1329 and another uncollared wolf were seen together on trail camera at a food cache.

**M1240 (collared)**

The IFT documented this wolf primarily in the central portion of the GNF throughout October.

**M1244 (collared)**

Throughout October, the IFT located this wolf traveling with Dark Canyon wolf f1278 in the central portion of the GNF, north of the Gila Wilderness.

**M1277 (collared)**

The IFT documented this wolf traveling in the northeast portion of the GNF and outside of the BRWRA boundary during October.

**f1278 (collared)**

The IFT has documented this wolf separate from the rest of the Dark Canyon Pack and traveling with M1244 throughout October

**f1281 (collared)**

The IFT did not locate f1281 during October, but will continue searching for it in November.

**f1295 (collared)**

During October, the IFT located this wolf traveling alone in the western portion of the GNF.

**M1296 (collared)**

In October, the IFT located this wolf traveling outside the BRWRA boundary and in the northeastern portion of the GNF.

**MORTALITIES**

No wolf mortalities were reported in October.

**Necropsy update on f1289**

An independent laboratory performed a comprehensive gross and microscopic necropsy on wolf f1289, which died August 18 during routine capture processing. The necropsy yielded no specific cause of death. The animal was in good condition. No evidence of trauma or underlying disease was noted, but metabolic conditions or heart arrhythmias cannot be ruled out. Although a specific cause of death was not determined by the necropsy, the IFT is classifying this mortality as a capture-related mortality.

**INCIDENTS**

During October, WS personnel investigated three livestock depredation incidents and no nuisance reports in the BRWRA.

On October 14, WS personnel investigated a dead cow near Torriette Lakes in New Mexico and determined the cause of death to be unknown.

On October 23, WS personnel investigated a dead yearling cow north of the Indian Peaks in New Mexico and confirmed it to have been killed by a wolf.

On October 24, WS personnel investigated a dead cow south of Big Lake in Arizona and determined the cause of death to be unknown.

### **CAPTIVE MANAGEMENT**

On October 20, M1215 was captured at the Ladder Ranch Wolf Management Facility and transferred to the Sevilleta Wolf Management Facility (Sevilleta).

On October 21, wolves F1222, F1226, M1141, F1188, F1033 and M1215 were given comprehensive veterinary evaluations at Sevilleta.

### **COMMUNICATION AND COORDINATION**

On October 5, IFT personnel attended the Woodland Wildlife Festival in Lakeside, Arizona, manning a Project information booth and interacting with approximately 500 individuals during the event.

On October 12, IFT personnel attended the White Mountain Science Fair in Pinetop, Arizona, interacting with approximately 47 individuals at a Project information booth.

### **PROJECT PERSONNEL**

No significant activity to report.

### **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.