



Mexican Wolf Blue Range Reintroduction Project Monthly Update

December 1-31, 2010

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 December 2010, the collared population consisted of 23 wolves with functional radio collars dispersed among ten packs. Some other uncollared wolves are known to be associating with radio-collared wolves, and others are separate from known packs.

The IFT has been actively following up on reports of uncollared wolves within the BRWRA this month. No additional evidence of uncollared wolves in the Raspberry Creek area below the Mogollon Rim was documented during December. The IFT will continue to search for wolf sign in this area. The IFT did confirm the presence of at least one uncollared wolf traveling with the Rim Pack in Arizona by setting a trail camera on an elk carcass in the pack's territory. The IFT also confirmed three uncollared animals in the Luna Pack with AF1115.

The IFT is beginning preparations for the annual Mexican wolf reintroduction project population count and capture operation next month. Personnel have been contacting landowners and other agencies to inform them of the operation, and inquire about the presence of uncollared wolves in the BRWRA. Currently, there is one approved translocation operation scheduled to occur in conjunction with the helicopter capture effort. The IFT is planning to capture AF1110 or f1188 from the Hawks Nest Pack and pair one of those wolves with M1049 from captivity. The objective of the translocation is to provide a breeding male for this pack. The alpha male and a yearling male from this pack were both shot last summer.

IN ARIZONA:

Bluestem Pack (collared AM806, AF1042 and m1183)

Throughout December, the IFT located AM806 and AF1042 in their traditional territory in the central portion of the ASNF. The IFT located m1183 of this pack traveling widely through and outside of the traditional Bluestem Pack territory in December.

Hawks Nest Pack (collared AF1110, f1188, fp1208, mp1209 and mp1210)

During December, the IFT located the Hawks Nest Pack in both its traditional summer and winter territory in the north-central portion of the ASNF.

Rim Pack (collared AF858, AM1107 and f1187)

Throughout December, the IFT located the Rim Pack utilizing both its summer and winter range areas on the central portion of the ASNF.

ON THE FAIR:

Paradise Pack (collared AF1056)

During December, the IFT located AF1056 within its traditional winter territory on the northwest portion of ASNF.

IN NEW MEXICO:

Dark Canyon (collared AM992 and AF923)

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

Luna Pack (collared M1156 and F1115)

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

Middle Fork Pack (collared AM871, AF861 and m1185)

In December, the IFT located AM871 and AF861 within their traditional territory in the central portion of the GNF. The IFT located m1185 in the north-central portion of the GNF once in mid-December well outside of the traditional pack territory.

San Mateo Pack (collared AF903)

The IFT located AF903 in its traditional territory in the north-central portion of the GNF during December.

Fox Mountain Pack (collared F521, M1157 and M1158)

During December, the IFT located M1157 within the traditional territory of the Fox Mountain Pack, which is in the northwestern portion of the GNF. The IFT documented M1158 traveling in the east-central portion of the ASNF in Arizona this month. The IFT found F521 dead in the northwest portion of the GNF in December.

Morgart's Pack (collared M1155)

Throughout December, the IFT located this wolf in the northeastern portion of the GNF.

MORTALITIES

The IFT located F521 of the Fox Mountain Pack dead this month. This wolf was 13 years old, and the cause of death was a gunshot. The case is currently under investigation.

INCIDENTS

The IFT received one report of a potential livestock depredation during December. A livestock producer in the Williamson Valley area near Prescott, Arizona, reported a dead cow with large-sized canid tracks adjacent to the carcass. The producer was concerned that the tracks could have been made by wolves. The initial investigation by AGFD personnel indicated that domestic dogs may have been responsible for the depredation. The carcass was located on private land, and the owner set traps adjacent to it. The only animal trapped was a large, domestic dog.

CAPTIVE MANAGEMENT

On December 14 and 15, several wolves at the Sevilleta and Ladder Ranch Wolf Management Facilities were handled for routine vaccinations, veterinary examinations, and separation for the breeding season. All animals appeared in good health.

COMMUNICATION AND COORDINATION

On December 4, Melissa Kreutzian and Susan Dicks gave a Project overview to approximately 30 students at Truman Middle School in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

PROJECT PERSONNEL

Sarah Rinkevich joined the Project in December as acting Field Projects Coordinator. She will be working for a two-month detail. Sarah has been with the FWS for 17 years, and her leadership on the field team is greatly appreciated.

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.