



Mexican Wolf Reintroduction Project Monthly Update

November 1 - 30, 2016

The following is a summary of Mexican Wolf Reintroduction Project (Project) activities in the Mexican Wolf Experimental Population Area (MWEPA) in Arizona, including the Fort Apache Indian Reservation (FAIR), San Carlos Apache Reservation (SCAR), and New Mexico. 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 www.azgfd.gov/wolf or by visiting the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service website at 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 www.azgfd.gov/signup. This update is a public document and information in it can be used for any purpose. The 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 semi-monthly wolf telemetry flight location information please visit <http://bit.do/mexicanwolf> or www.fws.gov/southwest/es/mexicanwolf/RWL.cfm

Please report any wolf sightings or suspected livestock depredations to: the Alpine wolf office (928) 339-4329, Pinetop wolf office (928-532-2391) 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.

Overall Mexican Wolf Recovery Program Monthly Update

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service convened the 5th Mexican wolf recovery planning workshop November 2-4 in Tucson, AZ. Represented at the workshop were the states of Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado, Utah, the Mexican governmental agencies SEMARNAT and CONANP, the USDA Forest Service and independent scientists from the United States and Mexico. The workshop participants continued with review of scientific information for analyzing areas of suitable habitat and input variables for the VORTEX model.

The Fish and Wildlife Service and the Forest Service met on November 16 to discuss coordination of Mexican wolf recovery efforts, including outreach and NEPA analysis of proposed release sites in Zone 1 of the revised Mexican Wolf Experimental Population Area.

In the month of November, The Fish and Wildlife Service sent letters inviting the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the National Park Service (NPS) to become partners in the Mexican wolf recovery program. Both agencies have land management responsibilities within the boundaries of the revised Mexican Wolf Experimental Population Area.

On November 30, the Fish and Wildlife Service, as well as members of the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish, New Mexico State Game Commission, biologists from CONANP and the University of Queretaro, Mexico, biologists from the Turner Endangered Species Fund (TESF) and several volunteers captured a family of 11 wolves at the TESF Ladder Ranch Wolf Management Facility. The wolves were collared, crated, and transported to Chihuahua, Mexico for release into the wild.

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. Studbook numbers listed in the monthly updated denote wolves with functioning radio collars. 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

Population monitoring requires year round effort documenting births, deaths, survival, total numbers, and distribution. Mortality occurs throughout the year and is particularly high on young pups, so while the IFT has documented reproduction this year, the IFT will not have a complete idea of how many of these young pups and adults have died until the annual population survey which is conducted in the winter. Annual surveys are conducted in the winter because it is when the population is experiencing the least amount of natural fluctuation (i.e. in the spring the population increases dramatically with the birth of new pups and declines throughout the summer and fall as mortality is particularly high on young pups). Thus, the IFT summarizes the total number of wolves in the winter at a fairly static or consistent time of year. This allows for comparable year-to-year trends at a time of year that accounts for most mortality and survival of young pups. At this time, the IFT’s best population estimate is that there was a minimum of 97 wolves in the wild as of December 31, 2015. End of year counts for 2016 are currently ongoing and will be completed in February. At the end of November, there were 54 wolves with

functioning radio collars that the IFT was actively monitoring.

IN ARIZONA:

Bear Wallow Pack (collared AM1338 and AF1335)

In November, the Bear Wallow Pack was located within their traditional territory in the east central portion of the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest (ASNF).

Bluestem Pack (collared M1382, F1443, fp1562 and fp1563)

In November, the Bluestem Pack continued to use their traditional territory in the east central portion of the ASNF. They periodically used a diversionary food cache established by the IFT to prevent potential depredation issues in the area. Two female pups (fp1562 and fp1563) were captured, collared and released in early November. Some wolves from the Bluestem Pack displayed dispersal behavior during the month. AF1042 was documented in New Mexico traveling in the vicinity of the Shepherders Baseball Park Pack. F1433 was documented traveling with m1447, of the Diamond Pack, in New Mexico near the Arizona border.

Elk Horn Pack (collared AF1294, AM1342, mp1474 and mp1471)

In November, the Elk Horn Pack was located within their traditional territory in the north eastern portion of the ASNF. The IFT documented rendezvous behavior by this pack during the month of November. A minimum of two uncollared pups were documented traveling with the Elk Horn pack this month.

Hawks Nest Pack (collared AM1038)

In November, the Hawks Nest Pack was mostly located within their traditional territory in the north central portion of the ASNF. The IFT documented dispersal movements by AM1038.

Hoodoo Pack (collared AM1290, AF1333, m1441, fp1549, and fp1550)

In November, the Hoodoo Pack remained in the north central portion of the ASNF. The IFT documented rendezvous behavior by the Hoodoo Pack this month. A minimum of three uncollared pups were documented traveling with the Hoodoo Pack this month.

Maverick Pack (collared AF1291)

In November, the Maverick Pack was located within their traditional territory both on the FAIR and ASNF.

Panther Creek Pack (collared AF1339, AM1394, mp1483, fp1484, and mp1486)

In November, the Panther Creek Pack was located in the east central portion of the ASNF. The Panther Creek Pack continued to show rendezvousing behavior during the month of November. A female pup, fp1485, was located dead in November and the incident is under investigation.

ON THE FAIR:

Diamond Pack (collared m1447, f1557, mp1558, mp1559 and fp1560)

In November, the Diamond Pack was located within their traditional territory in the eastern portion of the FAIR and the northern portion of the ASNF.

Tsay-O-Ah Pack (collared AM1343 and AF1283)

In November, the Tsay-o-Ah Pack was located within their traditional territory in the eastern portion of the FAIR.

Baldy Pack (collared M1347 and f1445)

In November, the Baldy Pack was located in the eastern portion of the FAIR and northern portion of the ASNF.

IN NEW MEXICO:

Dark Canyon Pack (collared AM992 and f1444)

During November, the IFT located this pack within its traditional territory in the west central portion of the Gila National Forest (GNF).

Iron Creek Pack (collared AM1240, AF1278 and mp1556)

During November, the Iron Creek Pack continued to utilize their territory in the northern portion of the Gila Wilderness and the southern portion of the GNF.

Lava Pack (collared F1405)

During November, the IFT documented F1405 (formerly of the Buckalou Pack) traveling with M1285 of the Lava Pack. The IFT trapped and re-collared F1405 and this pack is traveling in the south eastern portion of the GNF.

Luna Pack (collared AF1487 and mp1554)

During November, the Luna Pack remained in their traditional territory in the north central portion of the GNF.

Mangas Pack (collared M1296 and F1439)

During November, the Mangas Pack was located within their territory in north western portions of the GNF in New Mexico.

Prieto Pack (collared M1386, m1455, f1456, M1552, f1553 and fp1565)

During November, the Prieto Pack was located within their traditional territory in the north central portion of the GNF. There has been dispersal behavior documented for M1386, m1455, f1456 and M1552 within the GNF. Sub-adult, f1553, continues to be documented apart from the Prieto Pack and traveling with single male wolf M1398 in the west central portion of the GNF.

San Mateo Pack (collared AF1399)

During November, the IFT documented the San Mateo Pack within their territory in the north central portion of the GNF.

Shepherders Baseball Park (SBP) Pack (collared AM1284)

During November, the SBP Pack continued to use their traditional territory in the north central portion of the GNF. AM1284 was captured, re-collared and released. The IFT has documented

the survival of pups with the SBP Pack.

Willow Springs Pack (collared F1397)

During November, the IFT documented the Willow Springs Pack within their traditional territory in the north central portion of the GNF.

Leopold Pack (collared AM1293 and mp1561)

During November, the IFT documented that AM1293 had formed a pack and had pups. One of these male pups, mp1561, was captured, collared and released in November by the IFT. This is the first documented wolf pack that has formed naturally within the Gila Wilderness in New Mexico.

Single collared AM1155

During November, AM1155 was documented traveling within New Mexico.

Single collared M1398

During November, M1398 was documented traveling with f1553 of the Prieto Pack in the west central portion of the GNF.

MORTALITIES

During November, a female pup, fp1485, of the Panther Creek Pack was located dead in Arizona. The incident is under investigation.

INCIDENTS

During November, there was one livestock depredation report and no nuisance reports. There were no confirmed or probable wolf kills.

On November 28, Wildlife Services investigated a dead calf in Apache County, Arizona. The investigation determined the calf was killed by coyotes.

On November 7, an uncollared sub-adult male wolf, M1564, was captured and removed to captivity due to previous depredations associated with a removal order. Genetic analysis confirmed M1564 dispersed from the Hawk's Nest Pack. The removal of M1564 completed the removal order, and the FWS will evaluate the potential for this wolf to contribute to recovery in the future.

COMMUNICATION AND COORDINATION

On November 3, WMAT presented to a school group in Whiteriver, Arizona.

On November 14 and 15, the WMAT Mexican Wolf Program and the WMAT Rangeland Management Program met with the WMAT Tribal Cattle Associations regarding the Tribal Payment for Wolf presence application and funding for wolf/livestock mitigation measures.

PROJECT PERSONNEL

There are no personnel updates for the month of November.

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.