



Mexican Wolf Reintroduction Project Monthly Update

October 1 - 31, 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 USFWS assisted the Rio Grande Zoo with public education during Wolf Awareness Week on October 20, 2016.

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 estimate is that there was a minimum of 97 wolves in the wild as of December 31, 2015. At the current time there are 53 wolves with functioning radio collars that the IFT is actively monitoring.

IN ARIZONA:

Bear Wallow Pack (collared AM1338 and AF1335)

In October, 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, and f1488)

In October, the Bluestem Pack continued to use their traditional territory in the east central portion of the ASNF. The pack continued to display rendezvousing behavior through the month and periodically used a diversionary food cache to prevent potential depredation issues in the area.

Buckalou Pack (collared F1405)

In October, F1405 dispersed from Arizona and localized in the east central portion of the Gila National Forest in New Mexico.

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

In October, 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 October. The Elk Horn Pack has periodically used a food cache set up by the IFT to supplement the pack due to the cross-foster of two pups this spring. A minimum of two uncollared pups were documented traveling with the Elk Horn pack this month.

Hawks Nest Pack (collared AM1038)

In October, the Hawks Nest Pack was typically located within their traditional territory in the north central portion of the ASNF. The IFT documented a dispersal movement by AM1038 west onto the FAIR.

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

In October, the Hoodoo Pack remained in the north central portion of the ASNF. The IFT documented rendezvous behavior by the Hoodoo Pack this month. The Hoodoo Pack has continued to utilize the food cache put in place for them to prevent potential depredation issues in the area. A minimum of three uncollared pups were documented traveling with the Hoodoo Pack this month.

Marble Pack (collared AM1330)

AM1330 was not heard or located during the month of October and is now considered fate unknown.

Maverick Pack (collared AF1291)

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

Panther Creek Pack (collared AF1339, AM1394, mp1483, fp1484, fp1485, and mp1486)

In October, the Panther Creek Pack was located in the east central portion of the ASNF. The Panther Creek Pack continued to show rendezvousing behavior and utilize the food cache that the IFT has maintained for them to supplement the pack due to the two pups cross-fostered into the Panther Creek Pack in April. One male pup (mp1483) and two female pups (fp1484 and fp1485) were captured, collared, and released in October. These pups were wild-born and were not one of two pups cross-fostered into the Panther Creek Pack. A minimum of six pups were documented traveling with the pack this month, confirming that at least one cross-fostered pup survived to October.

ON THE FAIR:

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

In October, the Diamond Pack was located within their traditional territory in the eastern portion of the FAIR and the northern portion of the ASNF. One female (f1557), one female pup (fp1560), and two male pups (mp1558 and mp1559) were captured, collared, and released in October. The IFT confirmed AM1249 was traveling with the pack in October.

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

In October, 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 October, 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 October, 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 October, the Iron Creek Pack continued to utilize their territory in the northern portion of the Gila Wilderness and the southern portion of the GNF. A diversionary food cache is being maintained for the Iron Creek Pack to mitigate potential wolf-livestock conflicts. During October, mp1555, a male pup that had been captured at the end of September, slipped its collar.

Luna Pack (collared AF1487 and mp1554)

During October, the Luna Pack remained in their traditional territory in the north central portion of the GNF. The IFT is maintaining a diversionary and supplemental food cache in efforts to reduce potential for further livestock depredations.

Mangas Pack (collared M1296 and F1439)

During October, the Mangas Pack was located within their territory in north western portions of the GNF in New Mexico. On October 24, a private trapper captured F1439 and contacted the IFT. Members from the IFT responded immediately, processed, recollared and released the female wolf onsite.

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

During October, the Prieto Pack was located within their traditional territory in the north central portion of the GNF. f1553 was documented traveling apart from the Prieto Pack with single male wolf M1398 in the west central portion of the GNF.

San Mateo Pack (collared AF1399)

During October, the IFT documented AM1345 and AF1399 traveling together within their territory in the north central portion of the GNF. The diversionary food cache that had been established and maintained since April was removed. No known wolf/livestock conflicts were documented for the San Mateo pack during the 2016 denning season.

Shepherders Baseball Park (SBP) Pack

During October, the SBP Pack continued to use their traditional territory in the north central portion of the GNF. AM1284 was documented on trail camera traveling with pups. The IFT began trapping efforts in October to recollar AM1284 and collar any pups.

Willow Springs Pack (collared F1397)

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

Single collared M1293

During October, M1293 was located within the Gila Wilderness in New Mexico. Trapping efforts were initiated in October to recollar M1293, along with any wolves traveling with him.

Single collared AM1155

During October, AM1155 was documented traveling within New Mexico.

Single collared M1398

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

MORTALITIES

There were no mortalities documented in the month of October.

INCIDENTS

During October, there were seven livestock depredation reports and no nuisance reports. Six of the seven depredation reports were confirmed or probable wolf kills.

On October 5, Wildlife Services investigated a dead calf in Apache County, Arizona. The investigation determined the calf was a confirmed wolf kill.

On October 8, Wildlife Services investigated a dead calf in Catron County, New Mexico. The investigation determined the calf was a confirmed wolf kill.

On October 13, Wildlife Services investigated a dead cow in Catron County, New Mexico. The investigation determined the cow was a probable wolf kill.

On October 13, Wildlife Services investigated a dead cow in Catron County, New Mexico. The investigation determined the cow was a confirmed wolf kill.

On October 13, Wildlife Services investigated a dead calf in Apache County, Arizona. The investigation determined the calf had been killed by coyotes.

On October 15, Wildlife Services investigated a dead calf in Apache County, Arizona. The investigation determined the calf was a confirmed wolf kill.

On October 22, Wildlife Services investigated a dead calf in Catron County, New Mexico. The investigation determined the calf was a confirmed wolf kill.

COMMUNICATION AND COORDINATION

In the end of September, USFWS personnel presented two informational talks on Mexican wolf recovery to around 250 Phoenix Zoo staff and patrons.

In October, USFWS gave two presentations on Mexican wolf recovery at The Wildlife Society National Conference in Raleigh, NC.

PROJECT PERSONNEL

In October, USFWS volunteer Elizabeth Karslake completed her six month position to pursue other professional endeavors. Thank you Elizabeth for your hard work and dedication, and best wishes in your pursuits!

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.