



## Mexican Wolf Reintroduction Project Monthly Update

December 1-31, 2015

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), 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](http://www.azgfd.gov/wolf) or by visiting the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service website at [www.fws.gov/southwest/es/mexicanwolf](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 [www.azgfd.gov/signup](http://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 [www.fws.gov/southwest/es/mexicanwolf/RWL.cfm](http://www.fws.gov/southwest/es/mexicanwolf/RWL.cfm)

**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.

### Overall Mexican Wolf Recovery Program Monthly Update

In December, the USFWS met with the states of Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, and Utah; scientists from both the U.S. and Mexico to review the “Vortex” model, which is a population viability analysis model being used to explore demographic and genetic threats to the Mexican wolf. Participants discussed the structure of the model, input values, scenarios to explore, scientific assumptions and uncertainties, and how to interpret the output. The USFWS will use the Vortex simulations to inform the development of recovery criteria. Additional meetings will be convened in March and April 2016 to continue review of the Vortex model and to review information on habitat and prey availability in Mexico. The revised recovery plan will provide measurable and objective criteria which, when met, will enable us to remove the Mexican wolf

Field Code Changed

Field Code Changed

Field Code Changed

Field Code Changed

from the list of endangered species and turn its management over to the appropriate states. The revised recovery plan will also provide estimates of the time required and the cost to carry out those measures needed to achieve the plan's goal.

**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 December 2015 the wild Mexican wolf population consisted of 45 wolves with functional radio collars dispersed among 18 packs and two single wolves.

#### **IN ARIZONA:**

##### **Bear Wallow Pack (collared m1338 and f1335)**

In December the Bear Wallow Pack was located within their traditional territory in the east-central portion of the ASNF.

##### **Bluestem Pack (collared AF1042, m1331, f1333, m1382, m1404, and f1443)**

In December, the Bluestem Pack continued to use their traditional territory in the central portion of the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest (ASNF). Bluestem wolves' m1382, m1404, and f1443 have been located in their traditional territory during the month with at least two other uncollared wolves, while m1331, f1333, and f1405 have been located separate from the pack. Wolf m1331 has been located in the north-east portion of the GNF in New Mexico in December. Wolf f1333 has been traveling with the Hoodoo Pack, and wolf f1405 has been located traveling with M1161 for more than three consecutive months and are now referred to as the Buckalou Pack.

##### **Buckalou Pack (collared M1161 and f1405)**

M1161 and f1405 have been documented traveling together in the east-central portion of the ASNF for more than three months and are now referred to as the Buckalou Pack.

##### **Elk Horn Pack (collared AF1294 and M1342)**

In December, the Elk Horn Pack continued to make broad movements within their traditional territory in the northeast portion of the ASNF. The IFT continued to document only the collared pair traveling together.

**Hawks Nest Pack (collared AM1038, AF1280, m1383, and f1439)**

In December, the Hawks Nest Pack was located within their traditional territory in the north central portion of the ASNF. A minimum of four sets of tracks associated with the Hawks Nest Pack was documented. Wolf f1439 dispersed from the Hawks Nest Pack and has remained with M1296, of the Mangas Pack, in the northwestern portion of the Gila National Forest (GNF) in New Mexico.

**Hoodoo Pack (collared AM1290 and mp1441)**

In December, the Hoodoo Pack remained localized in the north-central portion of the ASNF. AM1290 has been located traveling with Bluestem f1333. Wolf mp1441 has been documented traveling alone.

**Marble Pack (collared AF1340, mp1440, and fp1442)**

In December, the Marble Pack was located in their traditional territory in the northwest-central portion of the ASNF. The IFT continued to document five animals (at least three pups) in the Marble Pack.

**Maverick Pack (collared AM1183 and AF1291)**

During December, the Maverick Pack was located within their traditional territory both on the FAIR and ASNF. The IFT has documented a minimum of four animals traveling together.

**Panther Creek Pack (F1339 and M1394)**

During December the Panther Creek Pack has been located in the east-central portion of the ASNF. The IFT documented three sets of tracks with this pack during the month indicating a third uncollared wolf with the pack.

**ON THE FAIR:**

**Diamond Pack (collared F1437)**

During December, the Diamond Pack was located in the eastern portion of the FAIR.

**Tsay o Ah Pack (collared M1343, AF1283, fp1445)**

During December, Tsay o Ah Pack was located in the eastern portion of the FAIR.

**Single (mp1447)**

During December, mp1447 was located in the eastern portion of the FAIR.

**IN NEW MEXICO:**

**Coronado Pack (collared AM1051)**

During December, AM1051 of the Coronado Pack was not located.

**Dark Canyon Pack (collared AM992, AF923, M1293, m1354, m1347, and fp1444)**

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

**Fox Mountain Pack (collared m1396)**

In December, the IFT documented the Fox Mountain Pack (m1396 and AM1158) outside of their traditional territory and traveling with f1397 of the Willow Springs Pack.

**Iron Creek Pack (collared AM1240 and AF1278)**

During December, 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 M1285 and F1295)**

In December, the Lava Pack was located in its traditional territory between the Gila Wilderness and the Elk Mountains.

**Luna Pack (collared AM1155, AF1115, and m1398)**

During December, the Luna Pack remained in their traditional territory in the north-central portion of the GNF. The IFT documented dispersal behavior of m1398 traveling between the east-central portion of the ASNF in Arizona and the north-central portion of the GNF in New Mexico.

**Prieto Pack (collared AM1387, AF1251, m1386 and f1392)**

During December, the Prieto Pack was located within their traditional territory in the north-central portion of the GNF. The IFT documented dispersal behavior of f1392 which was located with single wolf M1284 in the north-central portion of the GNF.

**San Mateo Pack (collared M1345)**

During December, the San Mateo Pack was located within their traditional territory in the north eastern portions of the GNF. AF903 was located dead in December in New Mexico.

**Willow Springs Pack (collared f1397)**

In December, the IFT located Willow Springs Pack f1397 in its traditional territory in the north central portion of the GNF traveling with Fox Mountain m1396 and AM1158. AM1185 was located dead in New Mexico this month.

**M1284 (collared)**

During December, the IFT located M1284 traveling with dispersing wolf f1392 from the Prieto Pack within the GNF in New Mexico.

**Mangas Pack (collared M1296)**

During December, M1296 was located traveling with dispersing wolf f1439 from the Hawks Nest Pack in north western portions of the GNF in New Mexico.

**MORTALITIES**

Four wolf mortalities occurred in December:

Rim AF1305 was located dead in Arizona. The incident is under investigation.

An uncollared juvenile wolf was located dead in Arizona. The incident is under investigation.

Willow Springs AM1185 was located dead in New Mexico. The incident is under investigation.

San Mateo AF903 was located dead in New Mexico. The incident is under investigation.

### **INCIDENTS**

During December, there were 5 livestock depredation reports involving wolves and no nuisance reports.

On December 2, Wildlife Services investigated a dead cow near O bar O canyon in New Mexico. The investigation determined the cow was killed by wolves.

On December 2, Wildlife Services investigated an injured calf near O bar O canyon in New Mexico. The investigation determined the calf sustained injuries from a wolf.

On December 11, WMAT investigated a dead cow in the eastern portion of the FAIR. The investigation determined the cow was killed by wolves.

On December 16, WMAT investigated a dead cow in the eastern portion of the FAIR. The investigation determined the cow was killed by wolves.

On December 29, Wildlife Services investigated a dead calf near Rainey Mesa in New Mexico. The investigation determined the calf was killed by wolves.

### **COMMUNICATION AND COORDINATION**

No significant activity to report

### **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.