



Mexican Wolf Reintroduction Project Monthly Update

January 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 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

The Fish and Wildlife Service met with the 11 Southwestern Region Forest Supervisors on February 4 to give an overview of the Mexican Wolf Recovery Program.

The Fish and Wildlife Service and the Arizona Game and Fish Department met with the Forest Service's Black Mesa Ranger District and local permittees on February 8 to discuss release/translocation sites for Mexican wolves.

The Fish and Wildlife Service and the Arizona Game and Fish Department will participate in the USDA Wildlife Service's Non-Lethal Damage Management Workshop at the Hon dah Casino and Hotel on February 18.

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

The IFT continued efforts to document the overall wolf population this month with track counts and visual observations being obtained on known packs. Food caches and trail cameras were also being deployed in an effort to document the uncollared portion of the population.

Project personnel commenced the end-of-year population count on January 20. The population count will conclude February 6 and the minimum population estimate for 2015 will be available in February. As a result of survey and capture efforts associated with the end-of-year population count, the collared population at the end of January 2016 consisted of 52 wolves with functional radio collars dispersed among 20 packs and 2 single wolves.

Note: In accordance with Standard Operating Procedure 27.0, the end-of-the-year population count is a minimum count with no range of numbers or associated statistical confidence intervals. The count includes three components:

1. All current radio-collared wolves and their pack associates being monitored as of December 31 of each year;
2. Radio-collared wolves whose collars are not functioning, but for which evidence exists indicating they were likely to have been on December 31, as determined by the IFT;
3. Uncollared wolves confirmed by IFT personnel anytime during November, December and January.

On January 20, the IFT captured AM1296, from the Mangas Pack. This wolf was re-collared and released it back into the pack territory.

On January 23, the IFT captured AF1295, from the Lava Pack. This wolf was re-collared and

released back into the pack territory.

On January 25, the IFT captured M1342, from the Elk Horn Pack. This wolf was re-collared and released back into the pack territory.

On January 25, the IFT captured and collared mp1453 from the Hawks Nest Pack. The wolf was processed and released back into the pack territory.

On January 25, the IFT captured m1383 from the Hawks Nest Pack, replaced the collar and released the wolf back into the pack territory.

On January 25, the IFT captured AM1341 from the Bluestem Pack. This wolf was fitted with a collar and released back into the pack territory.

On January 26, the IFT captured M1345 from the San Mateo Pack. The wolf was re-collared and released back into the pack territory.

On January 26, the IFT captured AF1115 from the Luna Pack. The wolf was re-collared and released back into the pack territory.

On January 26, the IFT captured AM1155 from the Luna Pack. The wolf was re-collared and released back into the Luna pack territory.

On January 26, the IFT captured m1354 from the Dark Canyon Pack. The wolf was re-collared and released on site.

On January 28, the IFT captured wolf M1249 from the Diamond Pack. The wolf was re-collared and released back into the pack territory.

On January 28, the IFT captured and collared mp1454 from the Diamond Pack. The wolf was released back into the pack territory.

On January 28, the IFT captured mp1442 from the Marble Pack. The wolf was evaluated for a foot injury and released back into the pack territory.

On January 28, the IFT captured AF1340 from the Marble Pack. The wolf died within minutes of being captured.

On January 28, the IFT captured AM1243 from the Marble Pack. The wolf was re-collared and released back in the pack territory.

IN ARIZONA:

Bear Wallow Pack (collared m1338 and f1335)

In January the Bear Wallow Pack was located within their traditional territory in the east-central

portion of the ASNF and the northeast portion of SCAR.

Bluestem Pack (collared AF1042, AM1341, m1331, f1333, m1382, m1404, and f1443)

In January, the Bluestem Pack continued to use their traditional territory in the central portion of the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest (ASNF). Bluestem wolves' m1382 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 January. Wolf f1333 has been traveling with the Hoodoo Pack. Wolf m1404 has been documented traveling with f1405 of the Buckalou pack.

Buckalou Pack (collared M1161 and f1405)

The collar on M1161 is non-functional. The wolf was not observed traveling with f1405 in January. Wolf m1404 was observed traveling with f1405 at the end of the month.

Elk Horn Pack (collared AF1294 and M1342)

In January, the Elk Horn Pack continued to make broad movements within their traditional territory in the northeast portion of the ASNF. On January 25, the IFT captured and replaced a non-functional radio collar on M1342. The wolf was released back into the Elk Horn territory.

Hawks Nest Pack (collared AM1038, m1383, f1439 and mp1453)

In January, the Hawks Nest Pack was located within their traditional territory in the north central portion of the ASNF. 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. AF1280 was not observed with the Hawks Nest Pack in January. One uncollared wolf was documented traveling with the Hawks Nest Pack. On January 25 an uncollared wolf (now designated mp1453) and m1383 were captured, processed, and released back into the Hawks Nest Pack territory.

Hoodoo Pack (collared AM1290 and mp1441)

In January, the Hoodoo Pack remained localized in the north-central portion of the ASNF. AM1290 has been located traveling with Bluestem f1333. Wolf mp1441 has rejoined AM1290 and f1333 and have been traveling together this month.

Marble Pack (collared AM1243, AF1340, mp1440, and fp1442)

In January, the Marble Pack was located in their traditional territory in the northwest-central portion of the ASNF. On January 28, the IFT captured AM1243, AF1340 and fp1442. AF1340 died within minutes of being captured. AM1243, formerly of the, Paradise Pack, was re-collared and released back into the Marble Pack territory. Wolf fp1442 was evaluated to assess a foot injury and released back into the Marble Pack territory.

Maverick Pack (collared AM1183 and AF1291)

During January, the Maverick Pack was located within their traditional territory both on the FAIR and ASNF. The IFT has observed 2 uncollared wolves traveling with the pack this month.

Panther Creek Pack (F1339 and M1394)

During January, the Panther Creek Pack has been located in the east-central portion of the ASNF. The IFT observed 2 collared wolves with this pack in January.

ON THE FAIR:

Diamond Pack (collared M1249, F1437, mp1447, and mp1454)

During January, the Diamond Pack was located in the eastern portion of the FAIR and the north portion of the ASNF. Wolf mp1447 regularly traveled with the Diamond Pack and the IFT determined that this animal is a Diamond Pack member. On January 28, the IFT captured and re-collared M1249. On the same day, the IFT captured and collared mp1454. Both wolves were released back into the pack territory.

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

During January, the Tsay o Ah Pack was located in the eastern portion of the FAIR. The IFT documented 1 uncollared wolf traveling with the pack.

Single (mp1447)

During January, mp1447 was located in the eastern portion of the FAIR, traveling regularly and extensively with the Diamond Pack. The IFT determined that this animal is a Diamond Pack member.

IN NEW MEXICO:

Coronado Pack (collared AM1051)

During January, AM1051 of the Coronado Pack was documented on a trail camera traveling alone in the Gila Wilderness.

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

During January, the IFT located this pack within its traditional territory in the west-central portion of the Gila National Forest (GNF). On January 26, the IFT captured and re-collared m1354. The wolf was processed, re-collared and released on site.

Fox Mountain Pack (collared m1396)

In January, the IFT documented the Fox Mountain Pack (m1396 and AM1158) outside of their traditional territory and traveling with f1397 of the Willow Springs Pack. Having been consistently located together for three months, f1397 is now considered a member of the Fox Mountain Pack.

Iron Creek Pack (collared AM1240 and AF1278)

During January, 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 AF1295 and mp1446)

In January, the Lava Pack was located in its traditional territory between the Gila Wilderness and

the Elk Mountains. On January 23, the IFT captured AF1295. The wolf was re-collared, processed and released back into the packs territory. On January 27 the wolf died and was recovered. The cause of the death is pending due to necropsy being performed.

Luna Pack (collared AM1155, AF1115, and m1398)

During January, the Luna Pack remained in their traditional territory in the north-central portion of the GNF. The IFT continues to document 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. On January 26, the IFT captured via helicopter, both AM1155 and AF1115. The wolves were re-collared and released back into the pack territory.

Prieto Pack (collared m1386 and f1392)

During January, the Prieto Pack was located within their traditional territory in the north-central portion of the GNF. During January, f1392 has continued to be located with single wolf M1284 in the north-central portion of the GNF. Wolf m1386 displayed dispersal behavior in January, but was later located back within the packs territory.

San Mateo Pack (collared M1345)

During January, the San Mateo Pack was located within their traditional territory in the north eastern portions of the GNF. F1399 was observed with M1345 in January.

Willow Springs Pack (collared f1397)

In January, 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. Having been consistently located together for three months, f1397 is now considered a member of the Fox Mountain Pack.

M1284 (collared)

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

Mangas Pack (collared M1296)

During January, M1296 was located traveling with dispersing wolf f1439 from the Hawks Nest Pack in north western portions of the GNF in New Mexico. On January 20, M1296 was captured during the helicopter population survey, re-collared and released back into the Mangas Pack territory.

MORTALITIES

Two wolf mortalities occurred in January:

On January 23, Lava Pack AF1295 was captured during the annual population survey, processed and released. The wolf was found dead on January 27. A necropsy will be conducted at the Fish and Wildlife Service's Forensics Laboratory in Ashland, Oregon, to determine causes of death.

On January 28, Marble Pack AF1340 was captured, during the annual population survey. The wolf died within minutes of its capture. A necropsy will be conducted at the Fish and Wildlife Service's Forensics Laboratory in Ashland, Oregon, to determine causes of death.

INCIDENTS

During January, there was 1 livestock depredation report involving wolves and no nuisance reports.

On January 16, Wildlife Services investigated a dead cow north of the town of Luna in New Mexico. The investigation determined the cow was killed by a wolf.

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.