



Mexican Wolf Reintroduction Project Monthly Update

March 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, the Mexican government, the states of Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, and Utah and independent scientists from both countries met in Wickenburg, Arizona for the second recovery planning workshop for the Mexican wolves. The participants continued to review demographic information for the Vortex model, which will evaluate extinction risk of various recovery scenarios, and explored availability of GIS layers that would enable modelling habitat in both the United States and Mexico.

The Fish and Wildlife Service met with the Mexican Wolf Tribal Working Group to discuss various issues regarding recovery planning and ongoing implementation of the revised 10j Rule.

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 March 2016, the wild Mexican wolf population consisted of 50 wolves with functional radio collars dispersed among 18 packs and one single wolf.

IN ARIZONA:

Bear Wallow Pack (collared m1338 and f1335)

In March 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, m1382, m1404, and f1443)

In March, the Bluestem Pack continued to use their traditional territory in the central portion of the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest (ASNF). Bluestem wolves AM1341, m1382 and f1443 have been located in their traditional territory during the month, while m1331 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 March. Wolf f1333 has been traveling with the Hoodoo Pack for three months and is now considered a Hoodoo Pack member. Wolf m1404 has been documented traveling with f1405 of the Buckalou pack. The IFT conducted a predation study on the Bluestem Pack during the month of March.

Buckalou Pack (collared M1161 and f1405)

Wolf m1404 from the Bluestem Pack was documented traveling with f1405 during this month. M1161 has a non-functional radio collar. The IFT has been unable to document M1161 traveling with the Buckalou Pack since m1404 began traveling with f1405.

Elk Horn Pack (collared AF1294 and AM1342)

In March, the Elk Horn Pack continued to travel within their traditional territory in the northeast portion of the ASNF.

Hawks Nest Pack (collared AM1038, M1383, and mp1453)

In March, the Hawks Nest Pack was located within their traditional territory in the north central portion of the ASNF.

Hoodoo Pack (collared AM1290, F1333 and mp1441)

In March, the Hoodoo Pack remained in the north-central portion of the ASNF. AM1290, F1333, and mp1441 have continued traveling together for three months. F1333 is now considered part of the Hoodoo Pack.

Marble Pack (collared AM1243, mp1440, and fp1442)

In March, the Marble Pack was located in their traditional territory in the northwest-central portion of the ASNF. The IFT has been conducting a predation study on the Marble Pack during the month of March.

Maverick Pack (collared AM1183 and AF1291)

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

Panther Creek Pack (F1339 and M1394)

During March, the Panther Creek Pack has been located in the east-central portion of the ASNF.

ON THE FAIR:

Diamond Pack (collared M1249, f1437, mp1447, and mp1454)

During March, the Diamond Pack was located in the eastern portion of the FAIR and the north portion of the ASNF. M1249 and f1437 spent the majority of the month on the FAIR and mp1447 and mp1454 spent the majority of the month on the ASNF.

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

During March, the Tsay O Ah Pack was located in the eastern portion of the FAIR.

IN NEW MEXICO:

Coronado Pack (collared AM1051)

AM1051 of the Coronado Pack was not located in March.

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

During March, the IFT located this pack within its traditional territory in the west-central portion of the Gila National Forest (GNF). Wolf m1354 was not located in March, M1293 was located separate from other pack members but near the southern extent of the packs territory, and mp1444 continued to display dispersal behavior. Wolf m1347 was located outside the Dark Canyon Pack territory for most of March.

Fox Mountain Pack (collared f1397 and m1396)

In March, the IFT documented the Fox Mountain Pack within their new territory in in the north central portion of the GNF. Wolf m1396 continued to be documented traveling with AF1115 of the Luna pack.

Iron Creek Pack (collared AM1240 and AF1278)

During March, 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 mp1446)

In March, 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 March, 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 mainly in portions of the GNF in New Mexico. Wolf M1398 is not considered a single wolf. Wolf AF1115 was located traveling with m1396 of the Fox Mountain Pack again throughout March.

Prieto Pack (collared m1386, mp1445 and f1392)

During March, the Prieto Pack was located within their traditional territory in the north-central portion of the GNF. F1392 has been located traveling separate from the pack and with m1284 for three months; f1292 and m1284 have been designated the SBP pack.

San Mateo Pack (collared M1345)

During March, the San Mateo Pack was located within their traditional territory in the north eastern portions of the GNF.

Mangas Pack (collared M1296, F1439)

During March, in the Mangas pack was located within their territory in north-western portions of the GNF in New Mexico.

M1284 (collared)

During March, the IFT located M1284 traveling with dispersing wolf f1392 from the Prieto Pack within the GNF in New Mexico. M1294 and f1392 have been consistently located together for three months and have been designated the SBP pack.

MORTALITIES

In March, fp1442 from the Marble Pack was located dead in Arizona. The incident is under investigation.

INCIDENTS

During March, there were 9 livestock depredation reports involving wolves and no nuisance reports.

On March 1, Wildlife Services investigated a dead cow in Catron County, New Mexico. The investigation determined the cow died of unknown causes.

On March 2, WMAT investigated a dead cow on the eastern portion of the FAIR. The investigation determined the cow died of unknown causes.

On March 4, Wildlife Services investigated a dead cow in Catron County, New Mexico. The investigation determined the cow was killed by a bear.

On March 9, WMAT investigated a dead cow and unborn calf on the eastern portion of the FAIR. The investigation determined the cow and calf died of illness/pregnancy complications.

On March 12, Wildlife Services investigated a dead cow in Catron County, New Mexico. The investigation determined the cow was killed by wolves.

On March 13, Wildlife Services investigated a dead calf in Apache County, Arizona. The investigation determined the calf was killed by wolves.

On March 15, Wildlife Services investigated a dead cow in Catron County, New Mexico. The investigation determined the cow died of unknown causes.

On March 15, Wildlife Services investigated a dead cow in Catron County, New Mexico. The investigation determined that the calf died of unknown causes.

On March 25, Wildlife Services investigated a dead cow in Catron County, New Mexico. The investigation determined that the cow died of unknown causes.

COMMUNICATION AND COORDINATION

On March 2, project personnel gave a project update at the University of Arizona in Tucson.

On March 8, WMAT gave a wolf project/predator presentation at the Rainbow Treatment Center on the FAIR.

On March 15, WMAT gave a wolf project/predator presentation at the Alchesay Event Center on the FAIR.

On March 28, the Mexican Wolf Executives Management Team met in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

On March 29, the Mexican Wolf Management Team met in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

PROJECT PERSONNEL

In March, Rowan Converse, a USFWS volunteer left the program. Thanks for all your hard work Rowan!

In March, Kenneth Loonam, a USFWS volunteer left the program. Thanks for all your hard work Kenneth!

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.