



Mexican Wolf Blue Range Reintroduction Project Monthly Update

June 1-30, 2011

The following is a summary of Mexican Wolf Reintroduction Project (Project) activities in Arizona on the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests (ASNF) and Fort Apache Indian Reservation (FAIR) and in New Mexico on the Apache National Forest (ANF) and Gila National Forest (GNF). Non-tribal lands involved in this Project are collectively known as the Blue Range Wolf Recovery Area (BRWRA). 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 <http://www.azgfd.gov/wolf> or by visiting the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service website at <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 <http://www.azgfd.gov/signup>. This update is a public document and information in it can be used for any purpose. The Reintroduction Project is a multi-agency cooperative effort among the Arizona Game and Fish Department (AGFD), New Mexico Department of Game and Fish (NMDGF), 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). Other entities, including private individuals and nongovernmental organizations, cooperate through the Project's Adaptive Management Work Group (AMWG) that meets periodically in Arizona and New Mexico.

To view weekly wolf telemetry flight location information or the 3-month wolf distribution map, please visit <http://www.azgfd.gov/wolf>. On the home page, go to the "Wolf Location Information" heading on the right side of the page near the top and scroll to the specific location information you seek.

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.

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 alpha 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 June 2011, the collared population consisted of 24 wolves with functional radio collars dispersed among nine packs and two single wolves. The IFT recaptured AM795 from the Paradise Pack in Arizona this month. This wolf was last located via radio telemetry signals in April of 2010. Photos from trail cameras placed in the Paradise Pack territory since that time have captured some photographs of this wolf; however, the IFT was only able to recapture it in June to positively determine it is still alive and a member of the Paradise Pack. The IFT replaced the radio telemetry collar and immediately released the wolf. Four days after AM795 was recaptured, the IFT collected the telemetry collar of AF1056 from the vicinity of the den site for this pack. As a result, the IFT determined that AF1056 was able to shed its telemetry collar and is still alive in the vicinity of the den site.

In June, the IFT continued with efforts to determine if AM1156 of the Luna Pack in New Mexico was alive and traveling with this pack. The IFT last located this wolf alive via telemetry signals in mid-April. The IFT now considers this wolf to be fate unknown.

Seasonal note: Wolf pups are generally born between mid-April and mid-May. During the upcoming months, the IFT will be actively monitoring wolf packs to determine if females are denning in order to document wild-born pups and estimate their survival. At the end of June, the IFT determined the following packs are exhibiting denning behavior: Paradise, Hawks Nest, Bluestem, Rim, Fox Mountain, San Mateo, Luna and Dark Canyon. The IFT has confirmed the presence of pups in several packs, including Hawks Nest, Bluestem, Paradise and San Mateo. Three of these packs in Arizona, including Hawks Nest, Bluestem and Rim, were impacted by the Wallow Fire in June. The IFT is working to determine the status of the pups in each pack. No pup mortalities have yet been documented, and all of the packs are continuing to spend time adjacent to den sites.

IN ARIZONA:

Bluestem Pack (collared AM806 and AF1042)

Throughout June, the IFT located AM806 and AF1042 in their traditional territory in the central portion of the ASNF. The IFT confirmed at least three pups with this pack in May. The den area for this pack was impacted by the Wallow Fire this month; however, the breeding pair continues to remain in the immediate vicinity of the suspected den area.

Hawks Nest Pack (collared AF1110 and f1208)

In June, AF1110 and f1208 continued to use their traditional territory in the north-central portion of the ASNF. The IFT confirmed the presence of five pups with this pack in May. This pack's

den area was also impacted by the Wallow Fire. AF1110 and f1208 abandoned the original den site after the fire moved through the area; however, the IFT has continued to locate AF1110 and f1208 in the vicinity adjacent to the den site throughout late June. The IFT will continue with efforts to document the presence of pups with this pack.

Rim Pack (collared AM1107, AF858, f1187 and f1213)

Throughout June, the IFT located the Rim Pack utilizing its summer range on the central portion of the ASNF. The den area for this pack was impacted by the Wallow Fire in June; however, all of the wolves in this pack have been documented in the immediate vicinity of the suspected den area. The IFT will continue with efforts to document the presence of pups with this pack.

Paradise Pack (collared AM795)

In June, AF1056 utilized the traditional summer range of its territory on the northern portion of the ASNF. The IFT has confirmed the presence of at least five pups with this pack this month. The IFT was able to recapture and recollar AM795 from this pack. This wolf was last located live via radio telemetry signals in April of 2010. In late June, AF1056 slipped out of its telemetry collar. Efforts to recapture and recollar this wolf will continue as appropriate.

ON THE FAIR:

M1183 (Collared)

During June, the IFT located this wolf on the FAIR.

IN NEW MEXICO:

Dark Canyon (collared AM992 and AF923)

Throughout June, the IFT located the Dark Canyon Pack within its traditional territory in the west-central portion of the GNF. This pack has localized in a portion of its territory, indicating the wolves are denning.

Fox Mountain Pack (collared M1158 and F1188)

Throughout June, the IFT documented these wolves together in the northwest portion of the GNF. They have localized their movements within a portion of their territory this month, indicating possible denning activity.

Luna Pack (collared AF1115)

In June, the IFT located the Luna Pack within its traditional territory in the north-central portion of the GNF. Throughout the month, AF1115 remained localized in a specific portion of its territory, indicating possible denning activity. The IFT has not located AM1156 via telemetry equipment since April. The IFT now considers this wolf to be fate unknown.

Middle Fork Pack (collared AM871, AF861 and f1211)

In June, the IFT located AM871 and AF861 within their traditional territory in the central portion of the GNF and the Gila Wilderness Area. They too have localized their movements within a portion of their territory this month, indicating potential denning activity. The IFT located f1211 traveling away from AF861 and AM871 in the west-central portion of the GNF during June.

Morgart's Pack (collared M1155)

Throughout June, the IFT documented this wolf traveling through the central portions of the GNF. The IFT obtained information this month that confirms that M1155 is now traveling with another wolf.

San Mateo Pack (collared AM1157, AF903 and f1212)

During June, the IFT located these wolves in the traditional San Mateo Pack territory in the north-central portion of the GNF. The IFT has determined that this pack is denning, and has produced at least five pups this year.

M1185 (collared)

Throughout June, the IFT located this wolf in the north-central portion of the GNF.

F1105 (collared)

In June, the IFT documented this wolf traveling alone through the northern portions of the GNF. Earlier this spring, the IFT implemented capture operations to assist in determining the breeding status of this wolf. During trapping efforts in May, the IFT located a den with five pups. IFT personnel inspected the pups at the den site and collected blood samples for analysis to determine their genetic makeup. Tests indicated the pups were the result of the female breeding with a domestic dog. IFT personnel returned to the den, removed the four pups present, and humanely euthanized them. The IFT has confirmed that this wolf is traveling with a pup-sized canid in June, and efforts to capture this wolf have continued this month.

MORTALITIES

No mortalities were reported this month.

INCIDENTS

On June 5, a livestock producer near East Elk Mountain on the GNF located a dead calf on private property. WS personnel investigated the carcass and determined it to have been killed by a wolf. On June, 8 the same livestock producer discovered another dead calf on their property. WS personnel examined the carcass and determined it to have been killed by a wolf as well. Both incidents have been assigned to f1211, which was traveling alone and away from the Middle Fork Pack.

On June 16, WS personnel investigated an injured calf near Underwood Lake on the GNF. They determined the injury to be due to a wolf attack. The calf died on June 20, and the incident is now a confirmed depredation. It has not yet been assigned to a particular wolf.

On June 22, WS personnel investigated a dead ewe in the vicinity of White Mountain Reservoir on the ASNF. The cause of death was determined to be a black bear.

On June 29, IFT personnel located a dead ewe in the vicinity of Norton Reservoir on the ASNF. WS personnel investigated the carcass, but could not determine the cause of death.

CAPTIVE MANAGEMENT

On June 22, Project personnel at the Sevilleta Wolf Management Facility captured, evaluated and immunized five seven-week-old pups. The litter consisted of one male (studbook number 1215) and four females (studbook numbers 1216, 1217, 1218 and 1219). All of the pups were healthy.

COMMUNICATION AND COORDINATION

On June 1, Mischa Larish and Cathy Taylor addressed 20 individuals at the Black Range Ranger District seasonal employee orientation. They discussed identification of wolves, coyotes and feral dogs; the status of the wolf reintroduction project in New Mexico and Arizona; and what to do if one encounters a wolf in the wild.

On June 23, Susan Dicks gave a Project overview to 40 individuals at the Sevilleta Long-term Ecological Research Center in Socorro, New Mexico.

PROJECT PERSONNEL

The IFT is disappointed to announce that Ellen Heilhecker and Mischa Larisch from the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish will no longer be working on the Mexican Wolf Reintroduction Project. Ellen has been with the Project since 2007, and has worked diligently during that time to further Mexican wolf recovery goals in New Mexico. Mischa has been with the Project for just over a year, and has provided a solid field presence working proactively with livestock producers to reduce conflicts on the ground. Many thanks to both of you for your efforts. You will be missed!

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.