



Mexican Wolf Blue Range Reintroduction Project Monthly Update

February 1-28, 2010

The following is a summary of Mexican Wolf Reintroduction 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 Web site at <http://www.azgfd.gov/wolf> or by visiting the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Web site at <http://www.fws.gov/southwest/es/mexicanwolf>. Past updates may be viewed on either Web site, 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 February 2010, the collared population consisted of 28 wolves with functional radio collars dispersed among nine packs and three single wolves. Two wolves from the Fox Mountain Pack, AM1038 and m1161, have not been located during aerial telemetry flights or ground telemetry surveys since mid-December 2009, and are now considered fate unknown. These wolves were not included in the February collared population total. Some other uncollared wolves are known to be associating with radio-collared wolves, and others are separate from known packs.

IN ARIZONA:

Bluestem Pack (collared AM806, AF1042 and mp1183)

Throughout February, the IFT located AM806, AF1042 and mp1183 in their traditional territory in the central portion of the ASNF and on the FAIR.

Hawks Nest Pack (collared AM1044, AF1110, m1155, m1189 and fp1188)

During February, the IFT located the Hawks Nest Pack in its traditional winter territory in the north-central portion of the ASNF. A yearling male from this pack, m1155, began to show dispersing movements away from the pack in January, and was traveling alone in Arizona in early February. Later in February, the IFT located this wolf in the northwest portion of the GNF in the vicinity of F1106.

Rim Pack (collared AF858, AM1107 and fp1187)

Throughout February, the IFT located the Rim Pack within its traditional winter range in the west-central portion of the ASNF.

M619 (collared)

In February, the IFT located M619 in the central portion of the ASNF, as well as the northwest portion of the GNF.

ON THE FAIR:

Paradise Pack (collared AM795 and AF1056)

During February, the IFT located the Paradise Pack within its traditional winter territory on the northwestern portion of the ASNF. This pack is listed under FAIR because it spends a significant amount of time during the non-winter months on the FAIR.

IN NEW MEXICO:

Dark Canyon (collared AM992 and AF923)

Throughout February, the IFT located the Dark Canyon Pack within its traditional territory in the west-central portion of the GNF.

Luna Pack (collared M1156 and F1115)

Throughout February, the IFT located the Luna Pack within its traditional territory in the central portion of the GNF.

Middle Fork Pack (collared AM871, AF861 and mp1185)

In February, the IFT located the Middle Fork Pack within its traditional territory in the central portion of the GNF.

San Mateo Pack (collared AF903 and AM1114)

The IFT located the San Mateo Pack in its traditional territory in the north-central portion of the GNF during February.

Fox Mountain Pack (collared AF521, m1157, and m1158)

In February, the IFT located three of the Fox Mountain Pack members outside of their traditional territory in the northwestern portion of the GNF. AF521, m1157 and m1158, were located in the north and north-central portion of the GNF this month. The IFT has not located AM1038 and m1161 since mid-December 2009.

F1106 (collared)

During February, the IFT located F1106 in the northwest portion of the GNF. This is a single wolf, and its movements have varied widely throughout the month. Later in February, the IFT located this wolf in the vicinity of m1155.

F1154 (collared)

During February, the IFT located this wolf in the Aldo Leopold Wilderness and the Gila Wilderness on the GNF.

MORTALITIES

No known wolf mortalities were documented in February.

INCIDENTS

The IFT investigated four potential livestock depredation incidents in February. One incident was confirmed as a wolf depredation, and a second incident was determined to be a probable wolf depredation. The other two incidents were unrelated to wolf depredations. Two of the four investigations were follow-up efforts of existing incidents that were first reported in January.

On January 27, Project personnel observed the Rim Pack next to a cow carcass on the SCAR near the border with the ASNF. This observation came during the annual wolf population count activities. On January 29, Wildlife Services (WS) personnel attempted to snowmobile to the site, but were unable to traverse the extremely muddy roads. The carcass was not investigated that

day due to the impassable roads into the area. On February 10, WS personnel were able to reach the carcass, and the investigation revealed that a single adult cow had died of unknown causes.

On January 30, Project personnel observed two members of the Fox Mountain Pack, AF521 and m1157, and several coyotes next to two calf carcasses north of Aragon in the Tularosa Mountains on the GNF in New Mexico. This observation also came during the annual wolf population count activities. On January 31, WS and NMDGF personnel attempted to travel to the area on ATVs, but they were unable to reach the carcasses due to deep snow conditions. On February 3, WS personnel were able to reach the area using a Sno-cat and investigated the carcasses. Based on the results of the investigation, they determined one of the calves was a probable wolf depredation, and the other carcass died from unknown causes.

On February 17, WS personnel investigated an adult cow in the vicinity of Maple Peak in Arizona. The cow had sustained injuries of unknown origin and later died as a result of those wounds. The investigation revealed the cow was attacked by a black bear.

On February 19, Project personnel responded to a report of wolves feeding on a dead calf carcass located on private property near Govina Canyon in New Mexico. The subsequent investigation revealed that at least two different wolves killed the calf. Personnel also investigated a dead bull in the immediate vicinity of the calf carcass, and determined it died from unknown causes. IFT personnel utilized telemetry equipment to document six different wolves from two packs, San Mateo and Fox Mountain, in the general vicinity of the incident on February 19. The IFT has not yet assigned the depredation incident to any specific wolves due to inconsistent information regarding the specific wolves most likely to have killed the calf.

CAPTIVE MANAGEMENT

On Monday, February 15, Project personnel captured and conducted routine medical evaluations of F886 and M1019 at the Ladder Ranch Wolf Management Facility. Both animals were found to be in excellent health.

COMMUNICATION AND COORDINATION

On February 25, Chris Bagnoli presented a Project overview at the BLM Office in Safford, Arizona, to 25 members of the public. A representative of the Quiviera Coalition also presented a short talk regarding potential livestock management strategies to minimize interactions between wolves and livestock in the Project area.

PROJECT PERSONNEL

Colby Gardner, wolf biologist for the Arizona Game and Fish Department, left the Project in mid-February. Colby spent five years with the Project, and was a consummate professional and example of commitment to Mexican wolf reintroduction. Her extensive knowledge and efforts to move the Project forward will be greatly missed. Thank you, Colby, for all of your hard work!

Michael Robinson joined the IFT as a FWS volunteer this month. Welcome to the Project, Michael!

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 \$40,000 for a total reward amount of up to \$52,000, 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.