



## Mexican Wolf Blue Range Reintroduction Project Monthly Update

February 1-28, 2013

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), 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 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 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 February 2013, the collared population consisted of 46 wolves with functional radio collars dispersed among 14 packs and five single wolves. The IFT located several of the collared single wolves traveling with other packs and dispersing wolves this month. 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 AF1042, mp1275, mp1277, fp1280 and fp1289)**

Throughout February, the IFT located these wolves in their traditional territory in the east-central portion of the ASNF. The IFT documented wolf m1240 continuing to travel widely throughout the BRWRA this month and now considers this wolf to be a single animal.

#### **Elk Horn Pack (collared AM1287 and f1294)**

In February, the IFT located these wolves traveling in the northeast and central portion of the ASNF in Arizona.

#### **Hawks Nest**

The IFT was able to confirm that AM1038 was still alive in the traditional Hawks Nest territory in the north-central portion of the ASNF; however, it has a nonfunctioning radio collar, making this wolf impossible to track with telemetry equipment.

#### **Maverick Pack (collared AM1183, mp1290 and fp1291)**

During February, the IFT located these wolves on the west-central portion of the ASNF, while mp1290 was located traveling separately from the other pack members. At the end of the month, mp1290 was located traveling with Rim Pack AM1107.

#### **Paradise Pack (collared AM795 and AF1056)**

In February, the IFT located AM795 and AF1056 using their traditional winter territory on the northern portion of the ASNF. The IFT documented m1245 traveling with this pack for a brief time during the middle of February. This wolf dispersed back to the GNF later in the month.

#### **Rim (collared AM1107)**

Throughout February, the IFT located AM1107 utilizing the south-central portion of the ASNF. Later in the month, the IFT documented this wolf traveling with mp1290 from the Maverick Pack in the traditional winter territory for the Rim Pack.

### **ON THE FAIR:**

#### **Tsay o Ah Pack (collared AM1253, m1254 and fp1283)**

During February, the IFT located AM1253 and fp1283 on the FAIR. The IFT did not locate m1254 during the month.

## **IN NEW MEXICO:**

### **Canyon Creek Pack (collared M1252 and F1246)**

In February, the IFT located these wolves traveling together in the central portion of the GNF.

### **Dark Canyon Pack (collared AM992, AF923, m1293 and fp1278)**

Throughout February, the IFT located this pack within its traditional territory in the west-central portion of the GNF.

### **Fox Mountain Pack (collared AM1158, AF1212, m1276, mp1274 and fp1281)**

Throughout February, the IFT documented these wolves in the northwest portion of the GNF. The IFT documented AF1212, AM1158 and m1276 traveling together, while mp1274 and fp1281 were located traveling together and separate from the other three collared wolves in this pack. The IFT located all of these wolves together during one weekly telemetry flight. Each location has been in the pack's traditional territory.

### **Luna Pack (collared AM1155, AF1115, mp1284, mp1285 and mp1286)**

In February, the IFT located the pack within its traditional territory in the north-central portion of the GNF.

### **Middle Fork Pack (collared AM871 and AF861)**

The IFT did not locate these wolves during February, due largely to logistical issues involving weather conditions, telemetry flights and telemetry collars that may be nearing the end of their operating life. The IFT will follow up during March with efforts to locate these wolves.

### **San Mateo Pack (collared AM1157, AF903, m1249, mp1282 and fp1292)**

In February, these wolves continued to use their traditional territory in the northern portion of the GNF. The IFT documented fp1292 and m1249 traveling away from the other pack members, but still within the pack territory.

### **Willow Springs Pack (collared M1185 and F1279)**

Throughout February, the IFT located these wolves in the north-central portion of the GNF.

### **m1240 (collared)**

The IFT has documented this wolf dispersing from the Bluestem Pack since December 2012. Throughout February, this wolf has traveled separately from other pack members. The IFT now considers this wolf to be a single animal.

### **m1243 (collared)**

Throughout February, the IFT located this wolf traveling widely through the GNF, including portions of the Gila Wilderness Area.

### **m1244 (collared)**

In February, the IFT located this wolf traveling widely through the GNF in New Mexico.

**m1245 (collared)**

During early February, the IFT documented this wolf traveling with AM795 and AF1056 of the Paradise Pack on the ASNF. Later in the month, this wolf dispersed back to the central portion of the GNF in New Mexico.

**f1251 (collared)**

Throughout February, the IFT located this wolf traveling separately from the Dark Canyon Pack in the north-central portion of the GNF. During the end-of-year count in January, the IFT found an uncollared wolf traveling with f1251; however, the IFT did not attempt to obtain a visual on this wolf in February.

**MORTALITIES**

No wolf mortalities were documented this month.

**INCIDENTS**

During February, IFT personnel investigated four potential livestock depredation incidents and two nuisance incidents in the BRWRA.

On February 6, IFT personnel investigated a report of an uncollared wolf in Reserve, New Mexico. The investigation revealed that the animal was not a Mexican wolf, but was most likely a wolf-dog hybrid.

On February 14, WS personnel investigated two old cow carcasses near Atascacita Springs on the ASNF. The cause of the deaths was undetermined.

On February 15, WS personnel investigated a dead bull on State Trust Lands northwest of Springerville, Arizona. The cause of death was undetermined.

On February 20, IFT personnel investigated a report of two collared wolves near a residence close to Pinedale, Arizona, approximately one mile from the FAIR. The investigation revealed wolf-sized tracks near the residence; however, snow conditions made positive track identification difficult. No radio telemetry signals were obtained during several days of follow-up investigations. Personnel placed a trail camera on an elk carcass in the general vicinity; however, no wolves were documented on the camera.

On February 26, WS personnel investigated a dead calf near St John's, Arizona. The cause of death was determined to be weather-related.

On February 27, WS personnel investigated a dead calf near Wagontongue Mountain on the GNF. The cause of death was undetermined.

**CAPTIVE MANAGEMENT**

On February 4, F858 was moved to the Sevilleta Wolf Management Facility in New Mexico.

On February 14 and 17, personnel at the Ladder Ranch Wolf Management Facility in New Mexico, in coordination with the Mexican Wolf Species Survival Plan, collected and froze semen from priority male wolves for future research and use.

### **COMMUNICATION AND COORDINATION**

No significant activity occurred this month.

### **PROJECT PERSONNEL**

No significant activity occurred this month.

### **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.