

Mexican Wolf Blue Range Reintroduction Project Monthly Update

February 1 – 29, 2008

The following is a summary of Mexican wolf reintroduction project activities in Arizona on the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests (ASNF) and in New Mexico on the Apache National Forest (AANF) and Gila National Forest (GNF), collectively known as the Blue Range Wolf Reintroduction Area (BRWRA). Additional 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) located on the Fort Apache Indian Reservation (FAIR). Other entities cooperate through the Adaptive Management Work Group (AMWG) that meets quarterly in Arizona and/or New Mexico, including private individuals, organizations and tribes.

To view the 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 18 months or pups. The capital letter “A” preceding the letter and number indicate alpha wolves.

Definitions: For the purposes of the Monthly Update, a “wolf pack” is defined as two or more wolves that maintain an established home range. 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, the collared population consisted of 24 wolves with functional radio collars dispersed among 12 packs. These numbers are different from the January update because the IFT captured M1039 and is temporarily holding it in captivity for veterinary treatment. Other

uncollared wolves are known to be associating with wolves having radio collars, as well as being separate from known packs.

IN ARIZONA:

Bluestem Pack (collared AF521, AM806, F1042 and F1113)

The IFT located the pack on the ASNF early in the month, but it then moved onto the FAIR. The IFT continued to locate F1113 separately on the ASNF through the end of the month.

Hawks Nest Pack (collared AM619 and AF1110)

Throughout February, the IFT located AM619 in and around the pack's traditional home range in the north-central portion of the ASNF. For most of February, the IFT located Paradise pack M1044 with AF1110 within the pack's traditional home range.

Paradise Pack (collared AM795 and M1044)

The IFT located AM795 in and around the pack's traditional home range in proximity to Greens Peak. The IFT located M1044 within the home range of the Hawks Nest pack. It accompanied Hawks Nest pack AF1110 for most of the month.

Rim Pack (collared AF858 and AM1107)

The IFT located AF858 and AM1107 within the pack's traditional home range in the central portion of the ASNF.

ON THE FAIR:

Bacho Pack (collared AM990)

Throughout February, the IFT located AM990 on the FAIR.

Lofer Pack (collared AF1056)

Throughout February, the IFT located AF1056 on the FAIR.

IN NEW MEXICO:

Dark Canyon (collared AM992 and AF923)

Throughout February, the IFT located the pack in the west-central portion of the GNF.

Luna Pack (collared AM583 and uncollared AF562)

Throughout February, the IFT located Luna within the pack's traditional territory in the central portion of the GNF.

Middle Fork Pack (collared AM871, AF861 and F1115)

The IFT released AF861 on February 1 to rejoin the Middle Fork pack after veterinary treatment for a leg injury. Throughout February, the IFT located the pack on and adjacent to the northern portion of the Gila Wilderness.

San Mateo Pack (collared AF903 and AM1114)

Throughout February, the IFT located the pack in the northern portion of the GNF.

Fox Mountain Pack (collared AM1038 and AF1111)

Throughout February, the IFT located the Fox Mountain pack in the northwestern portion of the ANF. Beginning on February 25 and for the remainder of the month, the IFT located AM1038 and AF1111 several miles apart.

Elk Mountain Pack (collared AM1045 and AF1112)

Throughout February, the IFT located the pack in the central portion of the GNF.

M1039 (collared)

The IFT captured M1039 on February 17 and is temporarily holding it in captivity for veterinary treatment of an injured leg.

F1040 (collared)

Throughout February, the IFT continued to search unsuccessfully for F1040. It remains “fate unknown.”

MORTALITIES

No known mortality of wolves occurred during February.

INCIDENTS

The IFT investigated three reports of dead livestock, one in Arizona and two in New Mexico, and determined that each was not wolf-related.

The IFT investigated a report of a horse injury in Arizona, but could not determine the cause of the injury.

CAPTIVE MANAGEMENT

Due to the current breeding season, wolves at the Ladder Ranch and Sevilleta Wolf Management Facilities, both in New Mexico, have been separated or paired to prevent or facilitate breeding activity respectively.

COMMUNICATION AND COORDINATION

IFT members contacted landowners and three county authorities, and coordinated with the Bureau of Land Management, New Mexico State Lands Office, and U.S. Forest Service prior to conducting a capture operation for M1039 in New Mexico.

On February 27, Maggie Dwire gave a presentation to approximately 25 Sierra Club members at the Sevilleta Wolf Management Facility.

PROJECT PERSONNEL

Shawna Nelson left the Arizona Game and Fish Department Field Team after serving nearly six years as a Wildlife Technician and more recently as the Project Outreach Coordinator when that limited position closed in January. She has taken a position as Outdoor Education Specialist with Hidden Meadow Lodge located outside of Greer, Arizona.

Kenneth Mills accepted the position of Field Team Leader for the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish.

Rebecca Mowry accepted a position as USFWS volunteer.

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 \$33,000 for a total reward amount of up to \$45,000, 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, AZ, at (480) 967-7900, in Alpine, AZ, at (928) 339-4232, or in Albuquerque, NM, at (505) 346-7828; the WMAT at (928) 338-1023 or (928) 338-4385; AGFD Operation Game Thief at 1-800-352-0700; or NMDGF Operation Game Thief at 1-800-432-4263. 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.