



## Mexican Wolf Blue Range Reintroduction Project Monthly Update

April 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 April 2011, the collared population consisted of 25 wolves with functional radio collars dispersed among nine packs and three single wolves. The IFT captured AF1056 from the Paradise Pack in Arizona and update its collar. The wolf was captured as part of an opportunistic trapping effort aimed at capturing an apparently uncollared wolf observed traveling with AF1056. Also in April, the IFT located m1210 from the Hawks Nest Pack dead in New Mexico.

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.

### **IN ARIZONA:**

#### **Bluestem Pack (collared AM806 and AF1042)**

Throughout April, the IFT located AM806 and AF1042 in their traditional territory in the central portion of the ASNF. In late April, AF1042 localized in one area of the pack's territory on the western portion of the ASNF, indicating possible denning activity.

#### **Hawks Nest Pack (collared AF1110 and f1208)**

On April 1, the IFT located m1210 dead in New Mexico. The IFT recovered the carcass, and an investigation into the cause of death is pending. AF1110 and f1208 continued to use their traditional territory in the north-central portion of the ASNF. On April 5, the IFT observed the pack and confirmed it consisted of three wolves – two collared and one uncollared. At the end of April, the IFT located f1208 traveling alone in the western portion of the pack territory.

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

Throughout April, the IFT located the Rim Pack utilizing both its summer and winter ranges on the central portion of the ASNF. During the month, the IFT located f1187 and f1213 leaving and then subsequently returning to the main pack. At the end of April, AF858 began to localize in one portion of the pack's territory, indicating possible denning activity.

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

On April 6, the IFT trapped and recollared AF1056 on the ASNF, releasing it onsite. AF1056 continued to use the traditional territory on the northwest portion of the ASNF in April. The IFT documented two sets of tracks with the Paradise Pack, indicating the uncollared wolf seen in March is still traveling with AF1056.

### **ON THE FAIR:**

**m1183 (Collared)**

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

**IN NEW MEXICO:****Dark Canyon (collared AM992 and AF923)**

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

**Fox Mountain Pack (collared M1158 and f1188)**

Throughout April, the IFT documented these wolves together in the north-central portion of the ASNF. They began to localize within a portion of their territory this month, indicating possible denning activity.

**Luna Pack (collared AM1156 and AF1115)**

In April, the IFT located the Luna Pack within its traditional territory in the north-central portion of the GNF. Toward the end of April, AF1115 had localized, indicating possible denning activity.

**Middle Fork Pack (collared AM871, AF861 and f1211)**

In April, the IFT located AM871, AF861 and f1211 within their traditional territory in the central portion of the GNF and the Gila Wilderness Area. On several occasions during April, the IFT located f1211 traveling away from the pack; however, it was traveling back with the pack at the end of the month.

**Morgart's Pack (collared M1155)**

Throughout April, the IFT documented this wolf traveling through the central portions of the GNF. All evidence found in April indicates M1155 is still traveling alone.

**San Mateo Pack (collared AM1157, AF903 and f1212)**

During April, the IFT located these wolves in the traditional San Mateo Pack territory in the north-central portion of the GNF. In late April, AF903 was found to be localizing and showing possible denning activity. On April 28, the IFT located the den site, and confirmed AF903 had given birth to five pups.

**m1185 (collared)**

Throughout April, the IFT located this wolf in the north-central portion of the GNF. The IFT believes m1185 is traveling alone.

**F1105 (collared)**

In April, the IFT documented this wolf traveling alone through the northern portions of the GNF. Last month, the IFT documented this wolf repeatedly traveling near and onto a private elk farm in the northern portions of the GNF, potentially interacting with domestic dogs in the vicinity. The IFT initiated trapping efforts to capture this wolf and perform an inspection regarding its breeding status. F1105 localized in the last part of April in the northern portion of the GNF and

efforts to capture the wolf are still ongoing.

### **MORTALITIES**

On April 1, the IFT located mp1210 of the Hawks Nest Pack dead. The IFT recovered the carcass, and an investigation into the cause of death is pending.

### **INCIDENTS**

On April 17, WS personnel investigated a dead calf on private property adjacent to the Blue River in Arizona. The carcass was several days old; however, WS personnel determined it was a probable wolf kill. The IFT assigned the incident to an uncollared wolf.

On April 22, WS personnel investigated a dead calf on the San Carlos Apache Reservation and determined that it was killed by wolves. The IFT assigned the incident to the Rim Pack. The same day, WS personnel investigated a cow carcass in the same general vicinity. The cow carcass was several weeks older than the calf, and WS determined it to be a probable wolf depredation.

On April 27, WS personnel investigated a dead calf in the Hardcastle Gap area, which they confirmed as a bear depredation.

### **CAPTIVE MANAGEMENT**

During April, FWS personnel implemented an aversive conditioning trial on a pack of wolves at the Sevilleta Wolf Management Facility in New Mexico. They performed the trial on AM968, m1200, m1201, f1202, f1203 and f1204. The breeding female of this pack, AF1064, was not included in the test as this wolf is pregnant. The effort was successful in that all of the wolves consumed the treated baits presented to them, which were made of cattle meat wrapped in cowhide. The wolves did not consume any additional bait after the initial feeding. The trial is designed to expose wolves to a food source that is a close approximation of domestic cattle, with the meat bait having been treated with a substance that would cause an unpleasant, but safe, reaction after it was consumed. This pack of wolves is available for initial release into the primary recovery area in Arizona.

### **COMMUNICATION AND COORDINATION**

On April 10, Maggie Dwire gave a Project overview to 70 individuals at the New Mexico Natural History Museum in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

### **PROJECT PERSONNEL**

Kyle Crowson joined the Project in April as a FWS volunteer. Welcome, Kyle.

### **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.