



Mexican Wolf Blue Range Reintroduction Project Monthly Update

July 1-31, 2009

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 July 2009, the collared population consisted of 26 wolves with functional radio collars dispersed among 10 packs and four single wolves. Some other uncollared wolves are known to be associating with radio-collared wolves, and others are separate from known packs.

Seasonal note: Wolf pups are generally born between mid-April and mid-May. The IFT has been actively monitoring wolf packs during the past several months in order to document wild-born pups and estimate their survival. Based on monitoring information from the last 15 weeks, the IFT has determined that the following packs displayed denning behavior and may have produced pups this spring: the Hawks Nest, Bluestem, Rim, Bacho, Paradise, Dark Canyon, Middle Fork and San Mateo Packs.

IN ARIZONA:

Bluestem Pack (AM806 and AF1042)

Throughout July, the IFT located AM806 and AF1042 in their traditional territory in the central portion of the ASNF. The IFT observed at least one pup with this pack.

Hawks Nest Pack (collared AM1044, AF1110 and mp1155)

During July, the IFT located the Hawks Nest Pack in its traditional territory in the central portion of the ASNF. The IFT documented seven pups with this pack.

Rim Pack (collared AF858 and AM1107)

Throughout July, the IFT located the Rim Pack within its traditional home range in the central portion of the ASNF.

M619 (collared)

During July, the IFT located M619 in the central portion of the ASNF.

ON THE FAIR:

Paradise Pack (collared AM795 and AF1056)

During July, the IFT located the Paradise Pack within its traditional territory on the northern portion of the FAIR.

Bacho Pack (collared AM990)

Throughout July, the IFT located AM990 within its traditional territory on the FAIR.

IN NEW MEXICO:

Dark Canyon (collared AM992 and AF923)

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

Luna Pack (collared M1156)

Throughout July, the IFT located M1156 in its traditional territory in the central portion of the GNF. During July, F1115 was documented traveling with M1156. The IFT will continue to monitor this situation to determine if pack formation occurs.

Middle Fork Pack (collared AM871 and AF861)

Throughout July, the IFT located the Middle Fork Pack within its traditional territory in the central portion of the GNF. The IFT documented at least four pups with this pack in June.

San Mateo Pack (collared AF903 and AM1114)

Throughout July, the IFT located the San Mateo Pack within its traditional territory in the north-central portion of the GNF. At least one pup is known to be with this pack.

Fox Mountain Pack (collared AM1038, AF521, mp1157, mp1158 and mp1161)

Throughout July, the IFT located the Fox Mountain Pack within its traditional territory in the northwestern portion of the GNF and the northeastern portion of the ASNF.

Laredo (collared F1028)

During July, the IFT documented F1028 in the northwestern and central portions of the GNF.

F1115 (collared)

Throughout July, the IFT documented F1115 in the north-central and central portions of the GNF. During July, F1115 was documented traveling with M1156 of the Luna Pack. The IFT will continue to monitor this situation to determine if pack formation occurs.

F1106 (collared)

During July, the IFT located F1106 in the central and north-central portions of the GNF.

MORTALITIES

The IFT did not document any wolf mortalities during July.

INCIDENTS

In total, the IFT investigated seven potential depredation incidents and one nuisance incident in July. Of the seven depredation incidents, the IFT confirmed one as a wolf depredation. The single nuisance investigation confirmed a wolf was present. The remaining investigations did not implicate wolves. Summaries of the investigations are as follows:

On July 2, the IFT conducted an investigation of an adult cow in the Dark Canyon Pack territory. The cow showed no signs of being attacked by a predator. The cause of death was unknown.

On July 6, the IFT investigated the depredation of an adult cow in the Paradise Pack territory on the FAIR and determined that it was killed by wolves. WMAT assigned the incident to AM795 and AF1056 of the Paradise Pack. This depredation was the first depredation incident for AM795 and the second depredation incident for AF1056 in the previous 365 days. At the end of June, one depredation incident on AF1056 expired, leaving both wolves with a single depredation incident assignment.

On July 13, an AGFD wildlife manager discovered a dead calf and injured cow near Highway 191 in Arizona. The IFT investigation revealed that the calf had died of birthing complications.

On July 15, the IFT received a report from a rancher in the Milligan Peak area of Arizona regarding a missing calf. The rancher reported seeing wolf-like animals in the area. Initial investigations by IFT personnel did not reveal wolf sign in the area. Two separate sightings of domestic dogs in the general vicinity have been confirmed by AGFD personnel.

On July 20, a member of the public reported finding the leg of a horse on Forest Service Road 26, west of Beaverhead in Arizona. IFT personnel determined that the owner of the horse was aware that the horse was dead. There is no reason to suspect wolf involvement in this incident.

On July 23, a private landowner reported a nuisance wolf incident south of the Negrito Work Center in New Mexico. The wolf reportedly left the area on its own after being observed and confronted by the property owner. The IFT investigated the report and determined that the wolf reported was F1028.

On July 27, the IFT discovered a dead bull on Highway 191 in Arizona. The investigation revealed that the bull was struck and killed by a vehicle.

On July 31, the IFT investigated a depredation report of one dead calf and one missing calf near Forest Service Road 63 in the Cibola National Forest in New Mexico. The investigation was determined to be a probable coyote depredation.

CAPTIVE MANAGEMENT

During the week of July 6, mp1176 and mp1177 were successfully integrated with M968 at the Sevilleta Wolf Management Facility (Sevilleta).

On July 24, mp1176 and mp1177 were captured at Sevilleta by project personnel for veterinary exams and vaccinations. The pups appeared to be in very good health.

COMMUNICATION AND COORDINATION

On July 8, Chris Bagnoli led a field discussion regarding wolf natural history for eight students and two instructors from Cottonwood Gulch School.

On July 11, Chris Bagnoli presented a Project overview to five adults and eight children at the

Big Lake campground in Arizona as part of the Springerville Ranger District's summer outreach efforts.

On July 15, Cathy Taylor and Paula Capece represented the Project before eight commissioners and attendees at the Catron County Commission meeting in Reserve, New Mexico.

On July 16, Paula Capece gave a "Wolf Trunk" presentation, sponsored by the Gila Conservation Education Center (GCEC), to 40 elementary summer school children and four instructors from the Stout Elementary School in Silver City, New Mexico.

On July 23, Paula Capece gave a discussion of local wildlife and predator-prey relationships during a "Wildlife Skulls Trunk" presentation, sponsored by GCEC, to approximately 36 elementary school children and four instructors in Silver City, New Mexico.

On July 29, Chris Bagnoli presented a Project overview to 33 NRCS employees at an annual training session at the ASNF Supervisor's Office in Springerville, Arizona.

On July 29, Colby Garner and John Oakleaf gave a "Wolf Trunk" presentation to 15 children and five adults at the Beaver Creek Guest Ranch in Arizona.

On July 29, Susan Dicks, DVM, Melissa Kreutzian and Bud Fazio presented a Project update to a group of approximately 40 people at the Native American Fish and Wildlife Society Southwest Regional Conference at Isleta Pueblo in New Mexico.

On July 29, Krista Beazley provided a Project presentation to approximately 30 participants at the Native American Fish and Wildlife Society Southwest Regional Conference at Isleta Pueblo, New Mexico.

PROJECT PERSONNEL

Beth Orning-Tschampl, AGFD wildlife technician, left the Project this month. Many thanks, Beth, for all of your hard work on the Project over the past year and a half!

Brittany Oleson, FWS volunteer, also left this month. Thank you for all your hard work, Brit!

Julie Golla joined the Project in July. Welcome to the Project, Julie!

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.