



Mexican Wolf Blue Range Reintroduction Project Monthly Update

October 1-31, 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 October 2010, the collared population consisted of 24 wolves with functional radio collars dispersed among ten packs. Some other uncollared wolves are known to be associating with radio-collared wolves, and others are separate from known packs.

Seasonal note: In October, the IFT continued fall trapping efforts to document pack status and pup recruitment in several packs in the BRWRA.

The IFT trapped two pups from the Hawks Nest Pack this month – fp1208 and a new male pup, mp1210. fp1208 was a recapture, and the IFT fitted it with a larger telemetry collar. This wolf was originally classified as a male pup when first captured in August; however, upon recapture it was determined to be a female. The IFT will continue efforts to collar pups from the Paradise Pack in November.

During October, the IFT conducted a helicopter count and capture operation in New Mexico. Goals of the operation included: 1) conduct pup counts, 2) fit VHF collars on pups, and 3) replace existing VHF collars with GPS collars on alpha wolves. During the pack counts, the IFT saw pups from the helicopter; however, trail camera photos from this past summer indicated there were more pups in the Luna and San Mateo Packs (three and five pups, respectively) than were seen from the air (one pup in each pack). In the Middle Fork Pack, the IFT observed one pup where trail cameras had photographed two pups. There have been no photographs or visual observations on any pups from the Dark Canyon Pack, even though attempts have been made, and adult behavior indicates the likelihood of pups. Attempts to dart alpha females or pups were not successful. Three alpha males were captured and fitted with GPS collars, including M1156 of the Luna Pack, M1155 of Morgart's Pack, and M871 of the Middle Fork Pack.

The IFT has been actively following up on reports of uncollared wolves below the Mogollon Rim in Arizona. Evidence of one or more wolves in this portion of the BRWRA was collected in October. The IFT will continue to search for additional wolf sign, as well as gauge the opportunity to capture and identify the unknown animal(s).

IN ARIZONA:

Bluestem Pack (collared AM806, AF1042 and m1183)

Throughout October, the IFT located the Bluestem Pack in its traditional territory in the central portion of the ASNF and the FAIR.

Hawks Nest Pack (collared AF1110, f1188, fp1208, mp1209 and mp1210)

During October, the IFT located the Hawks Nest Pack in its traditional summer territory in the

north-central portion of the ASNF. The IFT captured a new male pup, mp1210, this month.

Rim Pack (collared AF858, AM1107 and f1187)

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

ON THE FAIR:

Paradise Pack (collared AF1056)

During October, the IFT located AF1056 within its traditional summer territory on the FAIR and northwest portion of ASNF.

IN NEW MEXICO:

Dark Canyon (collared AM992 and AF923)

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

Middle Fork Pack (collared AM871, AF861 and m1185)

In October, the IFT located the Middle Fork Pack within its traditional territory in the central portion of the GNF. In May, the IFT documented m1185 traveling separate from the pack; however, in August, this wolf returned to the Middle Fork territory and has been documented with the alpha wolves. The IFT considers m1185 to be a member of the Middle Fork Pack again.

San Mateo Pack (collared AF903)

The IFT located the San Mateo Pack in its traditional territory in the north-central portion of the GNF during October. The IFT documented a minimum of five pups with this pack in October.

Fox Mountain Pack (collared F521, M1157 and M1158)

During October, the IFT located F521 and M1157 within the traditional territory of the Fox Mountain Pack, which is in the northwestern portion of the GNF. Toward the end of October, the IFT documented M1158 as traveling alone in the north-central portion of the GNF.

Morgart's Pack (collared M1155)

Throughout October, the IFT located Morgart's Pack in the northeastern portion of the GNF. In mid-October, F1106 was found dead within the pack's territory.

MORTALITIES

In mid-October, the IFT found F1106 dead in New Mexico. The wolf's death is under investigation.

INCIDENTS

The IFT did not receive or investigate any livestock depredation reports during October.

CAPTIVE MANAGEMENT

No significant activity this month.

COMMUNICATION AND COORDINATION

On October 1, Chris Bagnoli presented a Project overview to 14 individuals at a Society of American Foresters meeting in Pinetop, Arizona.

On October 11, Chris Bagnoli and Jeff Dolphin presented a Project overview and field management skills demonstration to 12 students and two instructors from the University of Arizona's wildlife management studies at the Sipe Wildlife Area near Eagar, Arizona.

On October 16, Melissa Kreutzian and Susan Dicks, DVM presented a Project overview to 25 individuals at the Sevilleta National Wildlife Refuge as part of the Refuge's open house event.

On October 15 and 16, Maggie Dwire, Melissa Kreutzian and Tom Buckley presented Project and Mexican wolf information at the Rio Grande Zoo during Wolf Awareness Week.

PROJECT PERSONNEL

Ryan Gordon from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Ecological Services office in Phoenix, Arizona, has been detailed to the Project for six weeks.

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.