



## Mexican Wolf Blue Range Reintroduction Project Monthly Update

November 1-30, 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 November 2009, the collared population consisted of 28 wolves with functional radio collars dispersed among nine packs and two single wolves. Some other uncollared wolves are known to be associating with radio-collared wolves, and others are separate from known packs.

On November 23, the IFT located AM990 deceased on the San Carlos Apache Reservation (SCAR) in Arizona. The IFT collected the carcass, and the wolf's death is under investigation.

Seasonal note: November marks the beginning of the Mexican wolf population count period that runs until the end of January. In addition to the formalized helicopter count and capture operation in January, the IFT is attempting to document uncollared wolf activity and locations within the BRWRA to assist in determining the final population estimate for 2009. Efforts include snow tracking and, in specific situations, trapping to capture and collar uncollared individual wolves on an opportunistic basis. The IFT encourages individuals in and around the BRWRA to report wolf sightings and/or tracks and other sign to the Alpine IFT office to help in this extensive effort.

### **IN ARIZONA:**

#### **Bluestem Pack (AM806, AF1042 and mp1183)**

Throughout November, the IFT located AM806, AF1042 and mp1183 in their traditional territory in the central portion of the ASNF and portions of the FAIR.

#### **Hawks Nest Pack (collared AM1044, AF1110, M1155 and fp1188)**

During November, the IFT located the Hawks Nest Pack in its traditional territory in the central portion of the ASNF.

#### **Rim Pack (collared AF858, AM1107 and fp1187)**

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

#### **M619 (collared)**

In November, the IFT located M619 in the central portion of the ASNF and western portion of the GNF.

### **ON THE FAIR:**

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

During November, the IFT located the Paradise Pack within its traditional territory on the northern portion of the FAIR and the northwestern portion of the ASNF.

**Bacho Pack (collared AM990)**

The IFT last located this wolf alive in mid-October on the ASNF. In late November, the IFT located it dead on the SCAR. The wolf's death is under investigation.

**IN NEW MEXICO:**

**Dark Canyon (collared AM992 and AF923)**

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

**Middle Fork Pack (collared AM871, AF861 and mp1185)**

In November, the IFT located the Middle Fork Pack within its traditional territory in the central portion of the GNF and Gila Wilderness.

**San Mateo Pack (collared AF903 and AM1114)**

The IFT located the San Mateo Pack within its traditional territory in the north-central portion of the GNF during the month of November.

**Fox Mountain Pack (collared AM1038, AF521, M1157, M1158 and M1161)**

In early November, the IFT located the Fox Mountain Pack within its traditional territory in the northwestern portion of the GNF. Later in the month, this pack moved to the north-central portion of the GNF.

**F1106 (collared)**

During November, the IFT located F1106 in the north-central portion of the GNF. This is a single wolf, and its movements have varied throughout the month.

**MORTALITIES**

The IFT documented one wolf mortality in November. AM990 was found dead on November 23 on the SCAR. The wolf's death is under investigation.

**INCIDENTS**

The IFT did not investigate any potential depredation incidents in November.

**CAPTIVE MANAGEMENT**

On November 23, Project personnel received F1064 from the California Wolf Center and placed

it at the Sevilleta Wolf Management Facility to be paired with M968 and mp1177 for the breeding season.

### **COMMUNICATION AND COORDINATION**

On November 2, the IFT hosted a public meeting to collect comment regarding a proposal to conduct an initial release of a wolf pack into Arizona at the Engineer Springs release site during the summer of 2010. The meeting was well attended by 23 members of the public, including two officials from Greenlee County.

On November 3, the IFT gave a presentation about the successes and difficulties associated with the Mexican Wolf Reintroduction Project to 12 students and faculty from Furman University, located in South Carolina. The students were spending three months at the Hermosa Research Station, associated with the Ladder Ranch in New Mexico, studying natural resource management, conservation biology and endangered species management.

On November 13, the IFT conducted a public meeting in Reserve, New Mexico, to collect comment regarding a proposal to translocate wolves onto the GNF during 2010. The meeting was well attended by approximately 20 members of the public, including three officials from Catron County.

The IFT has been conducting opportunistic hunter contacts in New Mexico and Arizona during the current elk and deer hunt seasons.

### **PROJECT PERSONNEL**

Elina Suvilampi, a foreign exchange student from Finland, joined the Project in November working for the USFS as an intern. Welcome to the Project, Elina!

Holly Lance, a FWS Project volunteer, left the Project in November. Thanks, Holly, for all of your hard work the past few months!

### **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.