



## Mexican Wolf Blue Range Reintroduction Project Monthly Update

December 1-31, 2012

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), 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).

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 December 2012, the collared population consisted of 42 wolves with functional radio collars dispersed among 14 packs and one single wolf. Some other uncollared wolves are known to be associating with radio-collared wolves, and others are separate from known packs.

Seasonal note: In December, the IFT continued with more focused efforts to document uncollared wolves within the BRWRA, including snow track surveys, trail cameras and coordinated follow-up regarding reported wolf sightings. IFT personnel have been conducting landowner contacts within the BRWRA, ahead of the annual 2012 population count effort that will begin in late January 2013. These calls are to advise private landowners of this planned activity and ask permission for IFT personnel to enter private lands to facilitate wolf counts and captures.

### **IN ARIZONA:**

#### **Bluestem Pack (collared AF1042, m1240, mp1275, mp1277 and fp1280)**

Throughout December, the IFT located these wolves in their traditional territory in the central portion of the ASNF. The IFT documented wolf m1240 traveling widely outside of this pack's traditional territory this month.

#### **Hawks Nest Pack (collared m1244)**

In December, IFT personnel located AF1208 dead within the packs' traditional territory in the north-central portion of the ASNF. The wolf's death is under investigation. The IFT documented AM1038 alive in the pack territory after AF1208 was found dead; however, AM1038 has a nonfunctioning radio collar, making it very difficult to track. m1244 has dispersed from the pack and has been traveling widely through the BRWRA.

#### **Paradise Pack (collared AM795, AF1056, m1243 and m1245)**

In December, the IFT located AM795 and AF1056 using their territory on the northern portion of the ASNF and the FAIR. The yearling wolves for this pack, m1243 and m1245, have dispersed and have been located traveling widely through the BRWRA.

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

Throughout December, the IFT located the Rim Pack utilizing the south-central portion of the ASNF.

### **ON THE FAIR:**

#### **Maverick Pack (collared AM1183)**

During December, the IFT located AM1183 on the FAIR and the west-central portion of the ASNF.

**Tsay o Ah Pack (collared AM1253, m1254 and fp1283)**

During December, the IFT located these wolves on the FAIR.

**IN NEW MEXICO:**

**Canyon Creek Pack (collared M1248 and F1246)**

In December, the IFT located F1246 and M1252 traveling together in the central portion of the GNF. The IFT has not been able to locate AM1248 since October 15, but will continue efforts locate it.

**Dark Canyon Pack (collared AM992, AF923, f1251 and fp1278)**

Throughout December, the IFT located this pack within its traditional territory in the west-central portion of the GNF. Later in December, the IFT documented f1251 traveling in the central portion of the GNF, away from the other wolves in this pack.

**Elk Horn Pack (collared AM1287 and AF1212)**

During early December, the IFT located these wolves traveling in the northwest portion of the GNF. Later in the month, the IFT located AF1212 traveling with the Fox Mountain Pack, while AM1287 was located on the west side of Escudilla Mountain on the ASNF.

**Fox Mountain Pack (collared AM1158, m1276, mp1274 and fp1281)**

Throughout December, the IFT documented these wolves in the northwest portion of the GNF. In late December the IFT documented AF1212 from the Elk Horn Pack traveling with AM1158 and m1276 of the Fox Mountain Pack in their traditional territory.

**Luna Pack (collared AM1155, AF1115, mp1284, mp1285 and mp1286)**

In December, the IFT located the pack within its traditional territory in the north-central portion of the GNF.

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

Throughout December, the IFT located these wolves within their traditional territory in the central portion of the GNF.

**San Mateo Pack (collared AM1157, AF903, m1249 and mp1282)**

In December, these wolves continued to use their traditional territory in the north portion of the GNF.

**Willow Springs Pack (collared M1185 and F1279)**

Throughout December, the IFT located these wolves in the north-central portion of the GNF.

**M1252 (collared)**

The IFT located this wolf in traveling with F1246 of the Canyon Creek Pack throughout the month of December.

**MORTALITIES**

During the month of December, the IFT located AF1208 of the Hawks Nest Pack dead within the traditional pack territory in Arizona. The wolf's death is under investigation.

### **INCIDENTS**

During December, IFT personnel investigated four livestock depredation incidents in the BRWRA.

On December 14, WS personnel investigated a dead cow on New Mexico State Trust lands north of Mangas, New Mexico. The cause of death was determined to be a wolf, and the incident was assigned to an uncollared wolf

On December 22, WS personnel investigated two dead calves in an area south of Red Hill, New Mexico. The cause of death was determined to be coyotes.

On December 27, WS personnel investigated a report of three dead calves near Petrified Forest National Park in Arizona. The cause of death was determined to be unknown and not related to predation.

On December 30, IFT personnel located a dead cow near Torriete Lakes in New Mexico. WS personnel investigated the carcass and determined it was killed by a wolf. The incident has not yet been assigned to a specific wolf or wolves.

### **CAPTIVE MANAGEMENT**

On December 12, at the Sevilleta Wolf Management Facility, Project personnel captured F1202, F1203, F1204, F1216, F1217, F1218, F1219, M1051, M1052 and F1126 for veterinary wellness exams and vaccinations. All animals appeared in good condition.

### **COMMUNICATION AND COORDINATION**

IFT Project personnel initiated landowner calls this month ahead of planned helicopter population count and capture activities in January of 2013.

### **PROJECT PERSONNEL**

No significant activity occurred this month.

### **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.