



## **Mexican Wolf Reintroduction Project Monthly Update**

April 1 - 30, 2018

The following is a summary of Mexican Wolf Reintroduction Project (Project) activities in the Mexican Wolf Experimental Population Area (MWEPA) in Arizona, including the Fort Apache Indian Reservation (FAIR), San Carlos Apache Reservation (SCAR), and New Mexico. 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 [www.azgfd.gov/wolf](http://www.azgfd.gov/wolf) or by visiting the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service website at [www.fws.gov/southwest/es/mexicanwolf](http://www.fws.gov/southwest/es/mexicanwolf). For information on the FAIR, call (928) 338-4385 ext. 226 or visit [www.wmatoutdoors.org](http://www.wmatoutdoors.org). Past updates may be viewed at these websites. Interested parties may [sign up](#) to receive this update electronically by visiting [www.azgfd.com](http://www.azgfd.com) and clicking on the E-news Signup tab on the top left corner of the webpage. This update is a public document and information in it can be used for any purpose. The Project is a multi-agency cooperative effort among the Arizona Game and Fish Department (AZGFD), 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 semi-monthly wolf location information please visit <http://arcg.is/0iGSGH> or [www.fws.gov/southwest/es/mexicanwolf/RWL.cfm](http://www.fws.gov/southwest/es/mexicanwolf/RWL.cfm).

**Please report any wolf sightings or suspected livestock depredations to:** the Alpine wolf office (928) 339-4329, Pinetop wolf office (928) 532-2391 or toll free at (888) 459-9653. For sightings or suspected depredations on the FAIR, please call the FAIR wolf office in Whiteriver at (928) 338-4385 ext. 226. To report incidents of take or harassment of wolves, please call the AGFD 24-hour dispatch (Operation Game Thief) at (800) 352-0700.

### **Overall Mexican Wolf Recovery Program Monthly Updates**

In April 2018, the U.S. District Court of Arizona issued an adverse decision on the revised 10(j) rule litigation, remanding the 2015 10(j) rule to the USFWS. The 2015 10(j) rule will remain in effect for the foreseeable future until the completion of this litigation.

On April 5, staff from the USFWS presented at the Arizona tribal/FWS coordination meeting. Management of Mexican wolves on tribal land was discussed.

From April 9-12, staff from USFWS, AGFD and New Mexico Department of Game and Fish attended the annual Trilateral committee meeting for wildlife and ecosystem conservation between the United States, Mexico and Canada. Staff presented to the Committee and attended management sessions that were held on Mexican wolf recovery.

**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) are used to indicate wolves younger than 24 months. A lowercase letter “p” preceding the number is used to indicate a wolf pup born in the most recent spring. The capital letter “A” preceding the letter and number indicates breeding 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. Studbook numbers listed in the monthly update denote wolves with functioning radio collars. 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**

The IFT completed the annual year-end population survey which started November 1, 2017 and concluded with helicopter count and capture operations conducted from January 24, 2018 through February 3, 2018. The year-end minimum population count for 2017 was 114 wolves in the wild in Arizona and New Mexico. Annual surveys are conducted in the winter as this is when the population experiences the least amount of natural fluctuation (i.e. in the spring the population increases dramatically with the birth of new pups and declines throughout the summer and fall as mortality is particularly high on young pups). Thus, the IFT summarizes the total number of wolves in the winter at a fairly static or consistent time of year. This allows for comparable year-to-year trends at a time of year that accounts for most mortality and survival of young pups. At the end of April, there were 75 wolves with functioning radio collars that the IFT was actively monitoring.

### **IN ARIZONA:**

#### **Bear Wallow Pack (collared AM1338, AF1335, M1676, and f1683)**

In April, the Bear Wallow Pack was located within their traditional territory on the east central portion of the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest (ASNF), and occasionally documented on the SCAR. Yearling female 1683 continued to make dispersal movements north and east of Bear Wallow’s traditional territory, but frequently rejoined the pack. Alpha female 1335 exhibited behavior and movements consistent with denning.

**Bluestem Pack (collared f1686)**

In April, the IFT documented Bluestem in the pack's traditional territory in the central portion of the ASNF. Yearling female 1686 has been exhibiting localized behavior and movements suggesting that AF1042, which has a non-functioning collar, may have denned.

**Elk Horn Pack (collared AF1294, f1668, and m1671)**

In April, the Elk Horn Pack was located within their traditional territory in the northeastern portion of the ASNF. This month, two neonatal pups born in captivity at the Endangered Wolf Center were cross-fostered by the IFT into the Elk Horn den. The IFT initiated a supplemental food cache near the den as part of the cross-foster effort and to reduce the potential for livestock-related conflict. The Elk Horn Pack continued to display behavior consistent with denning after the cross-foster operation was conducted.

**Frieborn Pack (collared AF1443 and AM1447)**

In April, the Frieborn Pack was documented within their territory in the east central portion of the ASNF in Arizona and New Mexico. This month, two neonatal pups born in captivity at the Endangered Wolf Center were cross-fostered by the IFT into the Frieborn den. The IFT initiated a supplemental food cache near the den as part of the cross-foster effort and to reduce the potential for livestock-related conflict. The Frieborn Pack exhibited behavior and movements consistent with denning after the cross-foster operation was conducted.

**Hoodoo Pack (collared AM1290, AF1333, m1666, m1677, and m1681)**

In April, the Hoodoo Pack was located within their traditional territory in the northeastern portion of the ASNF. The IFT hazed the Hoodoo Pack several times this month in the Nutrioso area to deter them from frequenting areas with residences. At the end of the month, the IFT initiated a diversionary food cache to reduce potential for conflict. The Hoodoo Pack displayed behavior consistent with denning within their traditional territory during April.

**Maverick Pack (collared AF1291)**

In April, the Maverick Pack was located within their traditional territory both on the FAIR and east central portion of the ASNF.

**Panther Creek Pack (collared AF1339, AM1382, and M1574)**

In April, the Panther Creek Pack was located in their traditional territory in the east central portion of the ASNF. Alpha Female 1339 and AM1382 have joined up and have been documented traveling as a pair. Sub-adult M1574 has been traveling separately from the pack.

**Pine Spring Pack (collared AF1562 and AM1394)**

In April, the Pine Spring Pack was located within their territory in the north central portion of the ASNF. The IFT continued to maintain a diversionary food cache on the ASNF for this pair to reduce potential for wolf-livestock conflict. The Pine Spring Pack displayed behavior consistent with denning within their territory during April.

**Prime Canyon Pack (collared AF1488 and AM1471)**

In April, the Prime Canyon Pack was documented traveling within a territory in the east central portion of the ASNF. Alpha female 1488 has been exhibiting behavior and movements consistent with denning behavior.

**Saffel Pack (collared AM1441, AF1567, m1661, and m1680)**

In April, the Saffel Pack was located in their traditional territory in the northeastern portion of the ASNF. The Saffel Pack displayed behavior consistent with denning within their traditional territory during April.

**Sierra Blanca Pack (collared M1571 and F1550)**

In April, F1550 of the Hoodoo Pack had localized in the east central portion of the ASNF and has been consistently documented traveling with M1571 formerly of the Diamond Pack. This pair has been documented traveling together and maintaining a territory for over three months and have been named the Sierra Blanca Pack.

**Single collared M1477**

In April, M1477 was documented in the east central portion of the ASNF.

**Single collared F1489**

In April, F1489 was documented traveling in the north central portion of the ASNF.

**ON THE FAIR:**

**Baldy Pack (collared AM1347, F1560, and m1672)**

In April, the Baldy Pack was documented traveling in the eastern portion of the FAIR and the north central portion of the ASNF.

**Tsay-O-Ah Pack (collared AM1343, AF1283, and f1674)**

In April, the Tsay-O-Ah Pack was located within their traditional territory on the FAIR.

**Tu dil hil Pack (collared M1559 and F1679)**

In April, M1559 and F1679 were assigned a pack name (Tu dil hil) after three months of traveling together. They were documented traveling in the eastern portion of the FAIR.

**IN NEW MEXICO:**

**Copper Creek Pack**

During April, the Copper Creek Pack was not located. Currently there are no functioning collars in this pack. Single M1673 was documented traveling within the Copper Creek territory in April. The IFT is monitoring this to determine if it has joined the pack.

**Dark Canyon Pack (collared AF1456 and AM1354)**

During April, the Dark Canyon Pack was documented traveling together within their traditional territory, in the west central portion of the GNF.

**Datil Mountain Pack (collared M1453 and F1685)**

During April, F1685 has continued to travel with M1453 in the western portion of the CNF for a period of three months, and the pair is now considered the Datil Mountain Pack.

**Hawks Nest Pack (collared AM1038 and F1473)**

During April, AM1038, formerly of the Hawks Nest Pack, has continued to travel with F1473 in north central portions of the GNF for a period of three months. The pair is now considered the Hawks Nest Pack. The IFT documented behavior consistent with denning in mid-April.

**Iron Creek Pack (collared AM1240, AF1278, m1555, m1556, and f1670)**

During April, the Iron Creek Pack continued to utilize their territory in the northern portion of the Gila Wilderness and the southern portion of the GNF.

**Lava Pack (collared AF1405 and AM1285)**

During April, the Lava Pack was located within their traditional territory in the southeastern portion of the GNF.

**Leopold Pack (collared AM1293 and AF1346)**

During April, the IFT documented the Leopold Pack within their territory in the northern portion of the Gila Wilderness.

**Luna Pack (collared AM1158, AF1487, and fp1684)**

During April, the Luna Pack remained in their traditional territory in the north central portion of the GNF. The IFT maintained a food cache for the Luna Pack to reduce potential for livestock conflict. In late-April, the Luna pack displayed behavior consistent with denning.

**Mangas Pack (collared AM1296, AF1439, and f1664)**

During April, the Mangas Pack was located within their territory in the northwestern portion of the GNF. The Mangas Pack displayed behavior consistent with denning within their traditional territory. The IFT maintained a diversionary food cache for the Mangas Pack to reduce potential for livestock conflict.

**Prieto Pack (collared AF1251, AM1398, F1565, m1669, and m1678)**

During April, the Prieto Pack was located within their traditional territory in the north central portion of the GNF. The Prieto Pack displayed behavior consistent with denning within their traditional territory.

**San Mateo Pack (collared AF1399 and f1578)**

During April, the San Mateo Pack continued to utilize their territory in the north central portion of the GNF. The IFT documented behavior consistent with denning for the San Mateo Pack in late April.

**Shepherders Baseball Park (SBP) Pack (collared AM1284, AF1553, mp1667, and fp1682)**

During April, the SBP Pack continued to use their traditional territory in the north central portion of the GNF. AM1284, mp1667 and fp1682 were not located in April. In late-April, the SBP Pack displayed behavior consistent with denning.

**Single collared AM1155**

During April, AM1155 of the old Morgart's Pack was not located by the IFT.

**Single collared M1486**

During April, M1486 traveled throughout the northern and central portions of the CNF.

**Single collared M1561**

During April, M1561 dispersed into Arizona and continued to make wide dispersal movements on both the ASNF and Coconino National Forests.

**Single collared M1673**

During April, M1673 traveled throughout the southern portion of the GNF.

**MORTALITIES**

There were no mortalities documented in April.

**INCIDENTS**

During the month of April, there were 12 confirmed wolf depredation incidents on livestock. There were 5 nuisance incidents investigated in April. From January 1 to April 30, 2018 there have been a total of 29 confirmed wolf depredation incidents in New Mexico and 11 confirmed wolf depredation incidents in Arizona.

On April 2, Wildlife Services investigated a dead cow in Catron County, NM. The investigation determined the cow was a confirmed wolf kill.

On April 2, Wildlife Services investigated a dead calf in Catron County, NM. The investigation determined the calf was stillborn.

On April 4, Wildlife Services investigated a dead cow in Catron County, NM. The investigation determined the cow died of natural causes.

On April 4, Wildlife Services investigated a dead calf in Catron County, NM. The investigation determined the calf was a coyote kill.

On April 5, the IFT took a report of wolves located near an occupied dwelling and livestock in Catron County, NM. The IFT and Wildlife Services investigated the incident. The IFT provided less than lethal training and rounds to the reporting party.

On April 6, Wildlife Services investigated a dead cow in Catron County, NM. The investigation determined the cow was a confirmed wolf kill.

On April 7, Wildlife Services investigated a dead cow in Catron County, NM. The investigation determined the cow was a confirmed wolf kill.

On April 9 and 10, the IFT received reports of two elk killed by wolves in the Nutrioso, AZ area. Both of the elk carcasses were removed by the IFT to eliminate any further attractant to wolves returning to areas with a concentration of residences. The IFT resumed efforts to haze wolves that entered the Nutrioso area and focused hazing efforts during nighttime hours. The IFT provided less than lethal training and rounds to five residents in Nutrioso to use to haze wolves if wolves were observed near residences on private property.

On April 11, Wildlife Services investigated a dead cow in Catron County, NM. The investigation determined the cow was a confirmed wolf kill.

On April 13, Wildlife Services investigated a dead bull in Apache County, AZ. The investigation determined the bull was a confirmed wolf kill.

On April 17, Wildlife Services investigated a dead cow in Catron County, NM. The investigation determined the cow was a confirmed wolf kill.

On April 18, Wildlife Services investigated a dead bull in Apache County, AZ. The investigation determined the bull was a confirmed wolf kill.

On April 19, Wildlife Services investigated a dead cow in Catron County, NM. The investigation determined the cow was a confirmed wolf kill.

On April 19, Wildlife Service investigated a dead calf in Socorro County, NM. The investigation determined the calf was killed by a coyote.

On April 21, Wildlife Services investigated a dead calf in Greenlee County, AZ. The investigation determined the calf was a confirmed wolf kill.

On April 21, Wildlife Services investigated a dead cow in Greenlee County, AZ. The investigation determined the cow was a confirmed wolf kill.

On April 23, Wildlife Services investigated a dead calf in Catron County, NM. The investigation determined the calf was a coyote kill.

On April 24, the IFT received a report of an elk killed by wolves in Auger Canyon near a residence and that three wolves were observed feeding on the carcass. The IFT determined from GPS points that the Hoodoo Pack had location points on the elk kill.

On April 27, the IFT received a report of an elk having been killed by wolves approximately 250 yards from the nearest residence in Nutrioso. The elk was removed from the location. A diversionary food cache was started near the Hoodoo Pack den to mitigate wolves hunting and killing elk in proximity to houses. Members of the Hoodoo Pack have been using the diversionary food cache regularly. The IFT maintained a presence in the Nutrioso area in effort to haze wolves if they returned to the valley and to visit with residents to provide self-help information on what to do if a wolf was encountered. The IFT has taken management action in this situation due to the wolves' repeated use of areas in close proximity to homes. It is important to note that the wolves have not been remaining in the community during the day and on the few occasions when encountered by people, the wolves have run away.

On April 27, Wildlife Services investigated a dead calf in Greenlee County, AZ. The investigation determined the calf was a confirmed wolf kill.

On April 27, Wildlife Services investigated an injured calf in Greenlee County, AZ. The investigation determined the calf was injured by a bear.

On April 30, Wildlife Services investigated a dead cow in Catron County, NM. The investigation determined that the cow was a confirmed wolf kill.

### **COMMUNICATION AND COORDINATION**

On April 5, WMAT presented to Arizona health professionals in Hon-Dah, AZ

On April 10, WMAT presented on KNNB radio in Whiteriver, AZ.

On April 14, USFWS personnel presented to a group at the Phoenix Zoo.

On April 25, USFWS and AGFD presented at a meeting held in Springerville hosted by Apache County.

### **PROJECT PERSONNEL**

The USFWS welcomed two new volunteers in March and two in April to the program. During this time, three other volunteers completed their volunteer commitment with the USFWS, moving on to other career opportunities and experiences. Thanks for all your hard work and dedication!

### **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.