



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

August 1 - 31, 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.wmatoutdoor.org](http://www.wmatoutdoor.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>.

**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**

Brady McGee has been selected for the USFWS Mexican Wolf Recovery Coordinator position. Brady will start in his new position October 1st. For the last four years, Brady has served as the USFWS Southwest Region's Chief for the Branch of Recovery and Restoration. Overall, he has worked in the Southwest Region since 2001 and has extensive experience with the Endangered Species Act, Mexican wolves and the challenges of wolf recovery in the Southwest. Brady has a

Masters in Wildlife Biology from Texas State University and a Doctorate degree in Wildlife Science from Texas Tech University.

**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 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. Counting the population at the end of each year 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 August, there were 70 wolves with functioning radio collars that the IFT was actively monitoring.

### **IN ARIZONA:**

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

In August, the IFT documented the Bear Wallow Pack in their territory on the east central portion of the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest (ASNF) and occasionally on the SCAR. Yearling f1683, M1676, and AM1338 were documented traveling separately. Subadult male 1676 made dispersal movements across the central and western portion of the ASNF and on the Coconino National Forest.

#### **Bluestem Pack (collared f1686)**

In August, the IFT documented the Bluestem Pack in the pack’s traditional territory in the east central portion of the ASNF. Yearling f1686 made dispersal movements from the pack’s territory this month within the eastern portion of the ASNF.

**Eagle Creek Pack (collared M1477)**

In August, M1477 continued to be documented traveling with an uncollared wolf. The pair has been holding a territory in the east central portion of the ASNF.

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

In August, the Elk Horn Pack was located within their traditional territory in the northeastern portion of the ASNF. The IFT discontinued a supplemental food cache that had been established for the pack as part of the cross-foster effort in April. The pack displayed localized behavior consistent with pup rearing during the month of August.

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

In August, the Hoodoo Pack was located within their traditional territory in the northeastern portion of the ASNF. The IFT discontinued a diversionary food cache that had been established for the pack in May. The pack displayed localized behavior consistent with pup rearing during the month of August. The IFT documented a minimum of three pups in the Hoodoo Pack this month.

**Panther Creek Pack (collared AM1382)**

In August, the IFT documented AM1382 traveling alone and making dispersal movements throughout the north central portion of the ASNF.

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

In August, 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 for this pack to reduce potential for wolf-livestock conflict. The pack displayed localized behavior consistent with pup rearing during the month of August.

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

In August, the IFT documented the Prime Canyon Pack within their territory in the east central portion of the ASNF. AM1471 and AF1488 exhibited behavior and movements consistent with pup rearing. The IFT maintained a diversionary food cache for this pack in a proactive attempt to reduce the potential for human-wildlife interactions near residences.

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

In August, the Saffel Pack was located in their territory in the northeastern portion of the ASNF. The pack displayed localized behavior consistent with pup rearing during the month of August. The IFT documented a minimum of five pups in the Saffel Pack this month.

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

In August, the Sierra Blanca Pack was located in their territory in the northeastern portion of the ASNF.

**Single collared F1489**

In August, the IFT documented F1489 traveling in the north and east central portion of the ASNF and in the eastern portion of the FAIR.

**Single collared M1574**

In August, the IFT documented M1574 traveling in the east central portion of the ASNF, the SCAR, and the eastern portion of the FAIR.

**ON THE FAIR:****Baldy Pack (collared AM1347, F1560, and m1672)**

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

**Maverick Pack (collared AF1291)**

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

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

In August, the Tsay-O-Ah Pack was located within their traditional territory in the eastern portion the FAIR.

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

In August, the Tu dil hil Pack was documented traveling in the eastern portion of the FAIR.

**IN NEW MEXICO:****Copper Creek Pack**

During August, the Copper Creek Pack was located via a remote camera traveling in the western portion of the Gila National Forest (GNF). Currently there are no functioning collars in this pack. Single M1673 was documented traveling with F1444 in August. The IFT is monitoring this to determine if M1673 has joined this pack.

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

During August, the Dark Canyon Pack was documented traveling together within their traditional territory, in the west central portion of the Gila National Forest (GNF). The Dark Canyon Pack continued to exhibit behavior and movements consistent with rearing pups during August.

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

During August, the Datil Mountain Pack continued to travel in the western portion of the Cibola National Forest (CNF).

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

In August, the Frieborn Pack was documented within their territory in the east central portion of the ASNF in New Mexico and Arizona. The IFT maintained a food cache near the den as part of the cross-foster effort and to reduce the potential for wolf-livestock conflict. The Frieborn Pack continued to exhibit behavior and movements consistent with rearing pups during August.

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

During August, the Hawks Nest Pack continued to travel separately. AM1038 continued to travel in the north central portion of the GNF, while F1437 was consistently located with its natal pack (Elk Horn) in Arizona.

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

During August, the Iron Creek Pack continued to utilize their territory in the northern portion of the Gila Wilderness and the southern portion of the GNF. The Iron Creek Pack continued to exhibit behavior and movements consistent with rearing pups during August.

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

During August, the Lava Pack was located within their traditional territory in the southeastern portion of the GNF. The Lava Pack continued to exhibit behavior and movements consistent with rearing pups during August.

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

During August, 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 August, the Luna Pack remained in their traditional territory in the north central portion of the GNF. The Luna Pack continued to display behavior consistent with rearing pups during August.

**Mangas Pack (collared AM1296, AF1439, f1664 and f1705)**

During August, the Mangas Pack was located within their territory in the northwestern portion of the GNF. The IFT maintained a diversionary food cache for the Mangas Pack to reduce potential for livestock conflict. The Mangas Pack continued to display behavior consistent with rearing pups within their traditional territory during August.

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

During August, the Prieto Pack was located within their traditional territory in the north central portion of the GNF. The IFT maintained a diversionary food cache for the Prieto Pack and implemented continuous hazing efforts to reduce potential for livestock conflict. The Prieto Pack continued to display behavior consistent with rearing pups within their traditional territory during August.

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

During August, the San Mateo Pack continued to utilize their territory in the north central portion of the GNF. The IFT maintained a diversionary food cache for the San Mateo Pack to reduce potential for livestock conflict. The San Mateo Pack continued to display behavior consistent with rearing pups during August.

**Shepherders Baseball Park (SBP) Pack (collared AF1553 and M1561)**

During August AF1553, of the SBP Pack and single M1561 continued to use the traditional territory of the SBP pack in the north central portion of the GNF. The wolves continued to exhibit behavior consistent with rearing pups.

### **Squirrel Springs Pack (collared F1788)**

In August the Squirrel Springs pack continued to travel in the north central portion of the GNF.

### **Single collared M1486**

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

### **Single collared M1673**

During August, M1673 was located via a remote camera traveling in the western portion of the Gila National Forest (GNF) with F1444 in August. The IFT is monitoring to determine if M1673 has joined the Copper Creek Pack.

## **MORTALITIES**

In August, AM1343 of the Tsay-O-Ah Pack was located dead in Arizona. This mortality is under investigation.

In August, fp1691 of the Elk Horn Pack was located dead in New Mexico. The mortality is currently under investigation.

From January 1, 2018 to August 31, 2018 there have been a total of eight documented wolf mortalities.

## **INCIDENTS**

During the month of August, there were two confirmed wolf depredation incidents on livestock. There were two nuisance incidents during August. From January 1, 2018 to August 31, 2018 there have been a total of 56 confirmed wolf depredation incidents in New Mexico and 24 confirmed wolf depredation incidents in Arizona.

On August 3, Wildlife Services investigated a dead cow in Coconino County, AZ. The investigation concluded the cow died from unknown causes.

On August 7, Wildlife Services investigated an injured dog in Apache County, AZ. The investigation determined it was probable the injuries were caused by another dog.

On August 8, Wildlife Services investigated a dead cow in Catron County, NM. The investigation determined the cow was a confirmed wolf kill.

On August 13, WMAT investigated a dead calf on the FAIR. The investigation determined the calf was a probable dog kill.

The IFT received information from a property manager who stated on August 16, a woman was sitting on a porch at a cabin located off Highway 191 north of Hannagan Meadow when a

collared wolf approached the cabin and started to walk up the porch steps. The woman stood up and yelled at the wolf which caused the wolf to run off. The wolf reportedly was seen trying to enter a barn before leaving the property. The property manager told the IFT that on the following day, a single collared wolf was again observed on the property. The manager walked outside and yelled at the wolf from a distance of approximately 50 yards, causing the wolf to run away. The manager told the IFT that the property had been unoccupied for months prior to the week in mid-August when these incidents occurred. At the time of preparing this report, the property manager told the IFT there had been no further sightings of wolves at the property.

On August 25, Wildlife Services investigated a dead calf in Apache County, AZ. The investigation determined the calf was a confirmed wolf kill.

The IFT took a report from a hunter who reported an encounter with a wolf pack on August 29, while hunting in the ASNF south of Alpine. The hunter told the IFT that he was deer hunting on foot in the early morning when he was surrounded by wolves approximately 100 yards away. The hunter reported that the wolves were growling, barking and moving back and forth. The hunter stated there were as many as nine to ten wolves. The hunter left the area to return to his vehicle and indicated the wolves followed him out. GPS collar data was used by the IFT to determine the encounter reported by the hunter was with the Prime Canyon Pack which consists of two adult wolves and a minimum of six pups from this year. The IFT concluded the hunter's encounter with the Prime Canyon Pack was a result of the hunter walking into a rendezvous site where the alpha wolves exhibited behaviors to protect the pups that were present. Wolves vocalizing and following a perceived threat out of an area where young pups are present is a behavior often exhibited by wolves.

After taking the report, the IFT posted informational signs and has maintained a presence in the area. At the time this report was prepared, there have been no additional incidents reported to the IFT involving interactions with the Prime Canyon Pack. The public is encouraged to report all wolf interactions to the IFT using the contact information provided at the beginning of this document. Any person may take (which includes killing as well as nonlethal actions such as harassing or harming) a Mexican wolf in self-defense or defense of the lives of others. Any form of take must be reported within 24 hours to the Mexican Wolf Recovery Program, USFWS by telephone 505-346-2525; or fax 505-346-2542.

## **COMMUNICATION AND COORDINATION**

On August 15, WMAT presented at the Native American Fish and Wildlife Society Conference in Ignacio, CO.

On August 11, AGFD personnel had an informational booth about wolves at the Show Low Chamber of Commerce Outdoor Expo in Show Low, AZ.

On August 27 and 28, the IFT and a group of wildlife program personnel from the Navajo Nation completed annual capture and immobilization training in Springerville, AZ.

## **PROJECT PERSONNEL**

In August, WMAT welcomed a temporary employee.

## **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 state law and 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.