



Mexican Wolf Reintroduction Project Monthly Update

December 1 - 31, 2017

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 or by visiting the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service website at www.fws.gov/southwest/es/mexicanwolf. For information on the FAIR, call (928) 338-4385 ext. 226 or visit 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 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 (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 semi-monthly wolf telemetry flight location information please visit <http://arcg.is/OiGSGH> or 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

The USFWS published the 2018 Mexican Wolf Release and Translocation Plan on the Mexican Wolf Recovery Program website from December 4 to 29, in order to comply with the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish regulations for permits. Over 100 public comments were received and will be forwarded to the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish for their review and consideration.

The USFWS attended the December 20, 2017 meeting of the New Mexico State Game Commission. The Commission voted to 1) approve the Final Mexican Wolf Recovery Plan as written including comments as discussed at the August 24, 2017 and December 20, 2017 Commission Meetings; 2) allow the USFWS to import Mexican wolf pups born in the wild in Arizona to the Ladder Ranch in coordination with the 2018 cross-fostering events (in addition, no wolves shall be released from the Ladder Ranch into the wild without prior approval); 3) direct the Director to allow for the importation of one female adult wolf in Arizona into captivity for artificial insemination, for breeding and then release back into the wild in Arizona; 4) direct the Director to allow for the release of up to 12 wolf pups into the wild in New Mexico with the approval of the Chairman of the State Game Commission.

At the end of November, 2017, the USFWS posted on its website the finalized Mexican Wolf Recovery Plan, First Revision. The goal of the plan is to provide guidance to recover the subspecies within the subspecies' historical range in the Southwestern United States and Mexico. The recovery plan provides measurable and objective criteria which, when met, will enable the USFWS to remove the Mexican wolf from the list of endangered species and turn its management over to the appropriate states and tribes. To review the recovery plan and related documents, visit the USFWS Mexican wolf website at:

<https://www.fws.gov/southwest/es/mexicanwolf/>

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 lower case 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

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.

During annual year-end population counts, the IFT documented a minimum of 113 Mexican wolves in the wild in Arizona and New Mexico at the end of 2016. At the end of December, there were 66 wolves with functioning radio collars that the IFT was actively monitoring. The year-end population count for 2017 will be available sometime in mid-February.

Wolves with functioning radio collars are listed by studbook number in the pack updates below.

IN ARIZONA:

Bear Wallow Pack (collared AM1338, AF1335, and m1673)

In December, the Bear Wallow Pack was located within their traditional territory on the east central portion of the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest (ASNF), occasionally using the SCAR. Yearling m1673 continued to make dispersal movements in December.

Bluestem Pack (collared F1489)

In December, F1489 continued making dispersal movements around the northern and western edges of the Bluestem Pack's traditional territory in the central ASNF.

Elk Horn Pack (collared AF1294, m1471, f1473, m1477, fp1668, and mp1671)

In December, the Elk Horn Pack was located within their traditional territory in the northeastern portion of the ASNF. Three yearling wolves, m1471, m1473 and f1477, each made dispersal movements, traveling separately, from their natal territory. Yearling m1477 was documented traveling with an uncollared wolf and maintaining a territory in the east central portion of the ASNF. Hazing efforts were conducted this month by the IFT in order to address wolf-livestock conflict with the Elk Horn Pack.

Frieborn Pack (collared F1443 and m1447)

In December, the Frieborn Pack was documented within their territory in the east central portion of the ASNF in Arizona and into New Mexico.

Hoodoo Pack (collared AM1290, AF1333, f1550, and mp1666)

In December, the Hoodoo Pack was located within their traditional territory in the northeastern portion of the ASNF.

Maverick Pack (collared AF1291)

In December, 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 December, the Panther Creek Pack was located in the east central portion of the ASNF. The IFT maintained a supplemental food cache for this pack with the goal of increasing survival of genetically valuable pups that the IFT cross-fostered into the Panther Creek Pack in May.

Pine Spring Pack (collared f1562)

In December, yearling f1562 was localized in the north central portion of the ASNF and has been

documented traveling with an unknown collared wolf. This pair has been documented traveling together for over three months and thus have been named the Pine Spring Pack. The IFT continued to maintain a diversionary food cache on the ASNF for this pair to reduce potential for wolf-livestock conflict.

Prime Canyon Pack (collared F1488)

In December, F1488 was documented traveling within a territory in the east central portion of the ASNF. During December, Elk Horn disperser m1471 began traveling in the same territory in proximity to F1488.

Saffel Pack (collared AF1567 and mp1661)

In December, the Saffel Pack was located in the northeastern portion of the ASNF.

Single collared AM1038

In December, AM1038 of the old Hawks Nest Pack was located traveling in the north central portion of the ASNF.

Single collared f1484

In December, f1484 was documented traveling alone and occasionally with the Panther Creek Pack in the Panther Creek's traditional territory in the east central portion of the ASNF.

ON THE FAIR:

Baldy Pack (collared mp1672)

In December, mp1672 was documented traveling occasionally with Diamond f1560 in the eastern portion of the FAIR. Male pup 1672 was also located in the northern portion of ASNF. AF1445 and AM1347 were not located by the IFT during 2017 and remain fate unknown.

Diamond Pack (collared m1559, f1560, m1571, and m1572)

In December, yearling m1559 was located on the FAIR. Yearling f1560 was documented traveling occasionally with Baldy mp1672 in the eastern portion of the FAIR and on the north central portion of the ASNF. Yearling m1571 continued to travel apart from other Diamond Pack members and made wide dispersal movements to the eastern portion of the FAIR and the central portion of the ASNF. Yearling m1572 remained dispersed from traditional Diamond territory on the Coconino National Forest during the month of December.

Tsay-O-Ah Pack (collared AM1343, AF1283, and fp1674)

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

IN NEW MEXICO:

Copper Creek Pack (collared M1386)

During December, M1386 was documented traveling in the northeast portion of the Gila Wilderness, outside of Copper Creek Pack territory. F1444 was not located during December.

Dark Canyon Pack (collared F1456 and M1354)

During December, F1456 and M1354 were documented traveling together within the west central portion of the Gila National Forest (GNF).

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

During December, the Iron Creek Pack continued to utilize their territory in the northern portion of the Gila Wilderness and the southern portion of the GNF. Sub-adult m1556 showed dispersal behavior in December, and was located in the east portion of the Gila Wilderness.

Lava Pack (collared F1405 and AM1285)

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

Leopold Pack (collared AM1293, AF1346, and m1561)

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

Luna Pack (collared AM1158 and AF1487)

During December, the Luna Pack remained in their traditional territory in the north central portion of the GNF.

Mangas Pack (collared AM1296, AF1439, and fp1664)

During December, the Mangas Pack was located within their territory in the northwestern portion of the GNF.

Prieto Pack (collared AF1251, AM1398, f1565, and mp1669)

During December, the Prieto Pack was located within their traditional territory in the north central portion of the GNF.

San Mateo Pack (collared AF1399 and fp1578)

During December, the San Mateo Pack continued to utilize their territory in the north central portion of the GNF.

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

During December, the SBP Pack continued to use their traditional territory in the north central portion of the GNF.

Single collared AM1155

During December, AM1155 of the old Morgart's Pack was documented traveling within the GNF in New Mexico.

Single collared m1486

During December, m1486 traveled throughout northern and central portions of the Cibola National Forest (CNF).

Single collared M1552

During December, M1552 traveled throughout central portion of the CNF and eastern portion of the GNF.

Single collared m1569

During December, m1569 traveled throughout central portion of the CNF and eastern portion of the GNF. In December, m1569 was captured by a private trapper in the western portion of the CNF. The IFT responded and processed, recollared, and released the animal on site.

Single collared M1453

On December 27, M1453 (previously fate unknown), was captured by a private trapper in the western portion of CNF. The IFT processed, collared, and released the animal on site.

MORTALITIES

During December, a previously uncollared wolf, f1675, was located dead in Arizona. This incident is under investigation. From January 1 to December 31, 2017 there have been a total of 12 documented wolf mortalities and one lethal removal (F1557).

INCIDENTS

During the month of December, there were 3 confirmed wolf depredation incidents on livestock and one confirmed wolf depredation on a domestic dog. There was one nuisance incident investigated. From January 1 to December 31, 2017 there have been a total of 19 confirmed depredation incidents in New Mexico and 15 confirmed depredation incidents in Arizona.

On December 13, Wildlife Services investigated a dead cow in Catron County, NM. The investigation determined the cause of death was unknown.

On December 13, Wildlife Services investigated a dead heifer in Catron County, NM. The investigation determined the cause of death was unknown.

On December 18, Wildlife Services investigated a dead cow in Catron County, NM. The investigation determined the cow was a confirmed wolf kill.

On December 26, Wildlife Services investigated a dead cow in Catron County, NM. The investigation determined the cow was a confirmed wolf kill.

On December 27, Wildlife Services investigated a domestic dog attacked in Catron County, NM. The investigation determined the incident was confirmed wolf.

On December 28, Wildlife Services investigated a dead cow in Catron County, NM. The investigation determined the cow was a confirmed wolf kill.

COMMUNICATION AND COORDINATION

There are no communication and coordination updates to report for the month of December.

PROJECT PERSONNEL

There are no updates to project personnel for the month of December.

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.