



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

February 1 - 28, 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 telemetry flight location information please visit <http://arcg.is/OiGSGH> 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**

On February 2, 2018, the Fish and Wildlife Service Mexican Wolf Recovery Coordinator briefed staff from Senator Udall and Senator Heinrich's staff on the status of the Mexican Wolf Recovery Program.

On February 21, 2018, the USFWS, AZGFD, and Mexico's National Commission of Natural Protected Areas (CONANP by its Spanish acronym) held a conference call to discuss collaboration in implementation of recovery actions in the two countries.

Reproduction Specialists with the Mexican Wolf Species Survival Plan collected semen from Mexican wolves at Ladder Ranch Wolf Management Facility on February 8, 2018, for the "frozen zoo," which will be used in future research and artificial insemination.

**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**

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. In 2016, the year-end minimum count was 113 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 February, there were 76 wolves with functioning radio collars that the IFT was actively monitoring.

### **IN ARIZONA:**

#### **Bear Wallow Pack (collared AM1338, AF1335, m1676, and fp1683)**

In February, the Bear Wallow Pack was located within their traditional territory on the east central portion of the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest (ASNF), occasionally documented on the SCAR.

**Bluestem Pack**

In February, the IFT documented the pack in the Bluestem Pack's traditional territory in the central portion of the ASNF. There are currently no functional collars in the pack, but the IFT continued to monitor the pack with trail cameras.

**Elk Horn Pack (collared AF1294, fp1668, and mp1671)**

In February, the Elk Horn Pack was located within their traditional territory in the northeastern portion of the ASNF. The IFT maintained a diversionary food cache on the ASNF for this pack to reduce potential for wolf-livestock conflict.

**Frieborn Pack (collared F1443 and m1447)**

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

**Hoodoo Pack (collared AM1290, AF1333, f1550, mp1666, mp1677, and mp1681)**

In February, the Hoodoo Pack was located within their traditional territory in the northeastern portion of the ASNF. Sub-adult f1550 was documented traveling apart from the Hoodoo Pack with single m1571 during the month of February.

**Maverick Pack (collared AF1291)**

In February, 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 February, the Panther Creek Pack was located in their traditional territory in the east central portion of the ASNF. Alpha Female 1339 was returned to the wild from captivity and released back in the Panther Creek Pack's territory. The members of the pack have been traveling separately.

**Pine Spring Pack (collared f1562 and AM1394)**

In February, 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.

**Prime Canyon Pack (collared F1488 and M1471)**

In February, F1488 was documented traveling within a territory in the east central portion of the ASNF. M1471 from the Elk Horn Pack has been documented traveling with Prime Canyon F1488 since December and is now considered a part of the Prime Canyon Pack.

**Saffel Pack (collared AM1441, AF1567, mp1661, and mp1680)**

In February, the Saffel Pack was located in their traditional territory in the northeastern portion of the ASNF.

**Single collared m1477**

In February, m1477 was documented in the east central portion of the ASNF and occasionally on the SCAR.

**Single collared f1484**

In February, f1484 was documented traveling alone to the east of the Panther Creek Pack's traditional territory in the east central portion of the ASNF. The IFT confirmed the mortality of f1484 in February. The incident is under investigation.

**Single collared F1489**

In February, F1489 has been traveling on the east side of Bluestem's traditional territory in the east Central portion of the ASNF.

**Single Collared m1571**

In February, m1571 was documented making dispersal movements in the north central portion of the ASNF. Male 1571 has been documented travelling with Hoodoo f1550 during the month of February.

**Single collared m1572**

In February, m1572 was documented making wide dispersal movements in the Coconino National Forest and through the western portion of the ASNF. In February, the IFT confirmed the mortality of m1572. The incident is under investigation.

**Single collared m1673**

In February, m1673 made dispersal movements back into Arizona and has been documented traveling in the area north of Bear Wallow Pack's territory.

**ON THE FAIR:****Baldy Pack (collared AM1347 and mp1672)**

In February, the Baldy Pack was documented traveling in the eastern portion of the FAIR and the northeastern portion of the ASNF.

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

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

**Single Collared wolf m1559**

In February, m1559 was documented traveling in the eastern portion of the FAIR with f1679.

**Single Collared wolf f1560**

In February, f1560 was documented traveling with the Baldy Pack in the eastern portion of the FAIR and northeastern portion of the ASNF.

**Single Collared f1679**

In February, f1679 was documented traveling with m1559 in the eastern portion of the FAIR.

**IN NEW MEXICO:**

**Copper Creek Pack (collared AM1386)**

During February, the Copper Creek Pack was documented traveling in the western portion of the Gila National Forest (GNF), within the packs traditional territory.

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

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

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

During February, 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 continued to show dispersal behavior. Male 1555 was also documented making dispersal movements in February.

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

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

**Leopold Pack (collared AM1293, AF1346, and m1561)**

During February, the IFT documented the Leopold Pack within their territory in the northern portion of the Gila Wilderness. Male 1561 continued to make dispersal movements within the GNF.

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

During February, 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.

**Mangas Pack (collared AM1296, AF1439, and fp1664)**

During February, the Mangas Pack was located within their territory in the northwestern portion of the GNF. Female pup 1664 was released within the Mangas Pack territory after temporary medical treatment for a foot injury.

**Prieto Pack (collared AF1251, AM1398, f1565, mp1669, and mp1678)**

During February, 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 February, 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, mp1667, and fp1682)**

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

**Single collared AM1155**

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

**Single Collared M1453**

In February, M1453 was documented traveling within the ASNF at the beginning of the month, then returned to the western portion of Cibola National Forest (CNF). M1453 has been documented traveling with f1685.

**Single collared m1486**

During February, m1486 traveled throughout the northern and central portions of the CNF.

**Single collared m1569**

During February, m1569 traveled throughout the central and northern portion of the CNF and in portions of the GNF.

**Single Collared f1685**

During February, f1685 was documented traveling with M1453 in the western portion of the CNF.

**Single collared AM1038**

During February, AM1038 of the old Hawks Nest Pack was documented traveling in north central portions of the GNF and was located at least once traveling with f1473.

**Single collared f1473**

During February, f1473 was documented traveling in north central portions of the GNF and was located at least once traveling with AM1038.

**MORTALITIES**

In February, f1484 was located dead in Arizona, the incident is under investigation.

In February, m1572 was located dead in Arizona, the incident is under investigation.

From January 1 to February 28, 2018 there have been a total of two documented wolf mortalities.

**INCIDENTS**

During the month of February, there were nine confirmed wolf depredation incidents on livestock. There were five nuisance incidents investigated in February, three of which were confirmed as wolf by the IFT. From January 1 to February 28, 2018 there have been a total of 14 confirmed wolf depredation incidents in New Mexico and three confirmed depredation incidents in Arizona.

On February 1, the IFT received a report of three wolves near an occupied residence in Apache County, AZ. The IFT confirmed the presence of wolves, but they had left the area by the time the report came in.

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

On February 5, Wildlife Services investigated a dead calf in Catron County, NM. The investigation determined the calf was a probable wolf kill.

On February 5, Wildlife Services investigated a dead cow in Catron County, NM. The investigation determined the cow was a confirmed wolf kill.

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

On February 6, the IFT received a report of a wolf from a highway in Catron County, NM. The IFT confirmed a wolf was in the area and attempted to haze the animal away, but the animal had already left the area.

On February 8, WMAT investigated a dead heifer on the FAIR. The investigation determined the heifer died of unknown causes.

On February 8, WMAT investigated a dead cow on the FAIR. The investigation determined the cow died of unknown causes.

On February 13, Wildlife Services investigated a dead calf in Catron County, NM. The investigation determined the calf was a confirmed wolf kill.

On February 20, Wildlife Services investigated a dead cow in Catron County, NM. The investigation determined the cow was a confirmed wolf kill.

On February 21, Wildlife Services investigated a dead cow in Catron County, NM. The investigation determined the cow was a confirmed wolf kill.

On February 21, Wildlife Services investigated a dead calf in Apache County, AZ. The investigation determined the calf had been killed by coyotes.

On February 23, the IFT received a report of a wolf feeding on an elk carcass in the vicinity of occupied residences. The IFT responded immediately, confirmed the presence of a wolf in the area and attempted to haze, but the animal had already left the area.

On February 24, Wildlife Services investigated a dead cow in Catron County, NM. The investigation determined the cow was a confirmed wolf kill.

On February 27, Wildlife Services investigated a dead cow in Catron County, NM. The

investigation determined the cow was a confirmed wolf kill.

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

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

### **COMMUNICATION AND COORDINATION**

On February 6, WMAT met with Tribal and non-Tribal stakeholders and a consultant regarding predator/livestock coexistence/conflict mitigation.

### **PROJECT PERSONNEL**

There are no project personnel updates for the month of February.

### **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.