



Mexican Wolf Recovery Program Monthly Update

February 1-28, 2019

The following is a summary of Mexican Wolf Recovery Program 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 Program 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 azgfd.gov/wolf or by visiting the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service website at fws.gov/southwest/es/mexicanwolf. For information on the FAIR, call (928) 338-4385 ext. 226 or visit wmatoutdoor.org. Past updates may be viewed at these websites. Interested parties may [sign up](#) to receive this update electronically by visiting 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 Mexican Wolf Recovery Program 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 AZGFD 24-hour dispatch (Operation Game Thief) at (800) 352-0700.

Overall Mexican Wolf Recovery Program Monthly Updates

The Federal government shutdown resulted in a delay of the annual helicopter count and capture operation by 19 days; however, the count was conducted in February within the appropriate time frame.

USFWS Regional Director Amy Lueders and Mexican Wolf Recovery Coordinator Brady McGee attended the WMAT Council Meeting on February 13.

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. 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

Year-end population counts for 2018 concluded during the month of February. The year-end minimum population count for 2018 will be released by the USFWS in March. 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 pup mortality generally occurs in this period). 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 when the Mexican wolf population is most stable.

At the end of February, there were 32 packs (15 in AZ and 17 in NM) and seven single collared wolves. There were 82 wolves with functioning radio collars that the IFT was actively monitoring. Not all of the wild wolves are collared. Studbook numbers following individual pack names below denote wolves with functioning radio collars.

IN ARIZONA:

Bear Wallow Pack (collared AM1338)

In February, the IFT documented AM1338 traveling with F1679 of the Tu dil hil Pack in the eastern portion of the FAIR.

Eagle Creek Pack (collared M1477)

In February, the IFT continued to document M1477 traveling with an uncollared wolf in their usual territory in the east central portion of the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest (ASNF).

Elk Horn Pack (collared AF1294, f1668, m1671, mp1695, fp1696, and fp1697)

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

Hoodoo Pack (collared AM1290, AF1333, m1677, m1681, mp1789, and f1830)

In February, the Hoodoo Pack was located within their traditional territory in the northeastern portion of the ASNF. During the annual helicopter count and capture, f1830 was captured, collared, and released.

New Pair (collared M1829 and F1489)

In February, the IFT documented F1489 traveling with M1829 in the north and east central portion of the ASNF. During the annual helicopter count and capture, M1829 was captured, collared and released. If this pair continues to travel together in March a new pack name will be determined before the March update is posted.

Pine Spring Pack (collared AM1394, fp1794, and fp1825)

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 for this pack to reduce potential for wolf-livestock conflict. AF1562 died in AZ after being captured by the IFT to replace a nonfunctioning GPS collar during the annual helicopter count and capture.

Prime Canyon Pack (collared AM1471, AF1488, mp1790, fp1791, and fp1823)

In February, the IFT documented the Prime Canyon Pack within their territory in the east central portion of the ASNF.

Saffel Pack (collared AM1441, AF1567, f1792 and fp1833)

In February, the Saffel Pack was located within their territory in the northeastern portion of the ASNF. During the annual helicopter count and capture fp1833 was captured, collared and released.

Sierra Blanca Pack (collared M1571 and F1550)

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

Single collared f1683

In February, f1683, a yearling from Bear Wallow Pack, was documented traveling with AM1382 of the Panther Creek Pack in the east central portion of the ASNF and occasionally on the FAIR.

Single collared AM1382

In February, M1382 of the Panther Creek Pack was documented travelling with f1683 of the Bear Wallow Pack in the east central portion of the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest (ASNF) and occasionally on the FAIR.

Single collared M1574

In February, the IFT documented M1574 traveling with an uncollared wolf in the east central portion of the ASNF and the SCAR.

Single collared f1686

In February, the IFT documented yearling f1686 continuing to make dispersal movements within the eastern portion of the ASNF and most recently in the north central portion of the Gila

National Forest in New Mexico.

Single collared m1677

In February, Hoodoo m1677 was documented making wide dispersal movements in New Mexico and the central portion of the ASNF.

ON THE FAIR:

Baldy Pack (collared AM1347 and F1560)

In February, 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 and fp1828)

In February, the Maverick Pack was located within their traditional territory in the eastern portion of the FAIR and east central portion of the ASNF. During the annual helicopter count and capture, a new collar was deployed on AF1291.

Tsay-O-Ah Pack (collared M1559, AF1283, and f1674)

In February, the Tsay-O-Ah Pack was located within their traditional territory and occasionally documented north of their territory on the FAIR. Additionally, f1674 was documented on the SCAR. During the annual helicopter count and capture, a new collar was deployed on f1674.

Single collared F1679

In February, F1679 of the Tu dil hil Pack was documented traveling in the eastern portion of the FAIR. F1679 was occasionally documented on the SCAR. During the annual count and capture, F1679 and Bear Wallow AM1338 were documented traveling together.

Single collared M1824

In February, M1824 was documented traveling with San Mateo f1578 in the northwestern portion of the Gila National Forest in New Mexico.

IN NEW MEXICO:

Copper Creek Pack (F1444)

During February F1444, the only wolf with a functioning collar in the Copper Creek Pack, was documented making wide dispersal movements in New Mexico outside the pack's traditional range.

Dark Canyon Pack (collared AM1354, AF1456, and mp1717)

During February, the Dark Canyon Pack was documented traveling together within their traditional territory, in the west central portion of the Gila National Forest (GNF). During the annual helicopter count and capture operation, mp1717 was captured, collared and released. In May 2018, mp1717 was cross-fostered by the IFT from the wild Lava Pack litter into the Dark Canyon Pack litter to reduce litter size and increase the chance of survival of two genetically valuable pups from captivity fostered into the Lava Pack.

Datil Mountain Pack (collared F1685)

During February, the Datil Mountain Pack traveled within their traditional territory in the western portion of the Cibola National Forest (CNF), as well as portions of the ASNF in Arizona.

Frieborn Pack (collared AF1443 and fp1702)

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

Iron Creek Pack (collared AM1240, AF1278, M1555, M1556, f1670, m1821, fp1721, mp1710 and fp1712)

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. During the annual helicopter count and capture operation, fp1712 was captured, collared and released. Female pup 1712 was cross-fostered by the IFT in May of 2018 from the Endangered Wolf Center into the Iron Creek den.

Lava Pack (collared AM1285, AF1405, and mp1715)

During February, the Lava Pack was located within their traditional territory in the southeastern portion of the GNF. During the annual helicopter count and capture, mp1715 was captured, collared, and released.

Leopold Pack (collared AM1293 and AF1346)

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

Luna Pack (collared AM1158, AF1487, and mp1831)

During February, the Luna Pack remained in their traditional territory in the north central portion of the GNF. Also during February, a private trapper captured mp1831. The IFT was notified and processed, collared and released the animal on site.

Mangas Pack (collared AM1296, AF1439, f1705 and m1832)

During February, the Mangas Pack was located within their territory in the northwestern portion of the GNF. During the annual helicopter count and capture operation, m1832 was captured, collared and released. The IFT established a diversionary food cache for the Mangas Pack to reduce potential conflict with livestock in February.

Prieto Pack (collared AM1398, AF1251, and mp1827)

During February, the Prieto Pack was located within their traditional territory in the north central portion of the GNF. During February, M1678 was located dead in New Mexico. The incident is under investigation. The IFT continued to maintain a diversionary food cache for the Prieto Pack to reduce potential for conflict with livestock in February.

San Mateo Pack (collared AF1399, f1578, fp1822, and fp1834)

During February, the San Mateo Pack continued to utilize their territory in the north central portion of the GNF. Collared female f1578 has continued to travel with single M1824 in the north central portion of the GNF. During the annual helicopter count and capture fp1834 was

captured, collared, and released.

Shepherders Baseball Park (SBP) Pack (collared AF1553)

During February, AF1553 was confirmed traveling in the traditional territory of the SBP pack in the north central portion of the GNF.

Squirrel Springs Pack (collared F1788 and M1349)

During February, the Squirrel Springs pack was located in the north central portion of the GNF.

Single collared M1673

During February M1673 was located dead in New Mexico. The incident is under investigation.

Single F1684

During February F1684 was located traveling in the north central portion of the GNF.

MORTALITIES

During the month of February, AF1562 of the Pine Spring Pack died in AZ after being captured by the IFT to replace a nonfunctioning GPS collar during the annual helicopter count and capture. M1678 of the Prieto Pack was located dead in New Mexico. Single M1673 was located dead in New Mexico. All of the incidents are under investigation.

From January 1, 2019 to February 28, 2019, there have been a total of 4 documented wolf mortalities.

INCIDENTS

During the month of February, there were eight confirmed wolf depredation incidents on livestock; determination of one investigation in NM is still pending. There was one nuisance incident investigated in February. From January 1, 2019 to February 28, 2019 there have been a total of 18 confirmed wolf depredation incidents in New Mexico and two confirmed depredation incidents in Arizona.

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

On February 11, WMAT investigated a dead cow. The investigation determined the cow died of unknown illness.

On February 12, the IFT took a nuisance report involving wolves in Catron County, NM. The reporting party told the IFT he was on horseback with hounds and that six wolves came within 50 yards. The outfitter yelled and ran at the wolves and the wolves left the area.

On February 12, Wildlife Services investigated an injured horse in Greenlee County, AZ. The investigation concluded the cause of the injuries were unknown.

On February 13, Wildlife Services investigated two dead cows in Catron County, NM. The investigation determined that one cow was a confirmed wolf depredation, the determination on

the second cow is still pending.

On February 15, Wildlife Services investigated two dead cows in Catron County, NM. The investigations determined both cows were confirmed wolf depredations.

On February 19, Wildlife Services investigated two dead cows in Catron County, NM. The investigations determined both cows were confirmed wolf depredations.

On February 19, Wildlife Services investigated a dead cow in Apache County, AZ. The investigation determined the cow was a confirmed wolf depredation.

On February 19, Wildlife Services investigated an injured cow in Greenlee County, AZ. The investigation concluded the cause of the injuries were unknown.

On February 25, WS investigated a dead calf in Apache County, AZ. The investigation determined the calf was a confirmed wolf depredation.

COMMUNICATION AND COORDINATION

On February 8, WMAT presented an update on KNNB radio in Whiteriver, AZ.

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; AZGFD 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.