



Mexican Wolf Reintroduction Project Monthly Update

January 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 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

On January 11, 2018, the USFWS met with the Catron County Commission to discuss the Mexican Wolf Recovery Program, the 2016 Office of Inspector General report, and communication.

On January 23, 2018, the USFWS met with the Chairman of the New Mexico State Game Commission, the Director of the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish (NMDGF) and

NMDGF staff to discuss permits for cross-fostering, the status of Mexican wolf recovery in Mexico, and communication.

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 population count for 2017 will be available in February. In 2016, the year-end minimum count was 113 wolves in the wild in Arizona and New Mexico. At the end of the helicopter count and capture operation, there were 79 wolves with functioning radio collars that the IFT was actively monitoring.

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.

January pack updates include the annual helicopter count and capture operation which occurred from January 24, through February 3, 2018.

IN ARIZONA:

Bear Wallow Pack (collared AM1338, AF1335, m1673, m1676, and fp1683)

In January, 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. Yearling m1673 continued to make dispersal movements into New Mexico and is now

considered a single animal. Yearling m1676 and female pup 1683 were captured, collared, and released during the annual helicopter count and capture operation.

Bluestem Pack (collared F1489)

In January, F1489 continued making dispersal movements around the northern and western edges of the Bluestem Pack's traditional territory in the central ASNF and is now considered a single animal. There are currently no functional collars in the pack, but the IFT continues to monitor the pack with trail cameras.

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

In January, the Elk Horn Pack was located within their traditional territory in the northeastern portion of the ASNF. In 2016, three yearling wolves from the Elk Horn Pack, m1471, f1473, and m1477, each dispersed from their natal territory. Yearling m1471 has been traveling with Prime Canyon F1488. AF1294 was captured, re-collared, and released during the annual helicopter count and capture operation. 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 January, the Frieborn Pack was documented within their territory in the east central portion of the ASNF in Arizona and into New Mexico. Female 1443 was captured, re-collared, and released during the annual helicopter count and capture operation.

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

In January, the Hoodoo Pack was located within their traditional territory in the northeastern portion of the ASNF. Male pups 1677 and 1681 were captured, collared, and released during the annual helicopter count and capture operation. Female 1550 was documented traveling with single m1571 during the helicopter count and capture operation.

Maverick Pack (collared AF1291)

In January, 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 January, the Panther Creek Pack was located in their traditional territory in the east central portion of the ASNF. AF1339 was captured, re-collared, and temporarily moved to captivity.

Pine Spring Pack (collared f1562 and AM1394)

In January, f1562 was localized in the north central portion of the ASNF and was documented traveling with AM1394 (previously fate unknown). AM1394 was captured, re-collared, and released during the annual helicopter count and capture. 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 January, F1488 was documented traveling within a territory in the east central portion of the ASNF. Yearling m1471 from the Elk Horn Pack has been documented traveling with Prime Canyon F1488 throughout January.

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

In January, the Saffel Pack was located in the northeastern portion of the ASNF. Male pup 1680 and AM1441 were captured, collared, and released during the annual helicopter count and capture operation.

Single collared AM1038

In January, AM1038 of the old Hawks Nest Pack was documented traveling within the GNF in New Mexico.

Single collared f1473

In January, f1473 was documented traveling alone and continued to make dispersal movements between Arizona and New Mexico.

Single collared m1477

In January, m1477 was documented traveling with an uncollared wolf in the east central portion of the ASNF.

Single collared f1484

In January, f1484 was documented traveling alone to the east and north of the Panther Creek Pack's traditional territory in the east central portion of the ASNF.

Single collared m1571

In January, m1571 was documented making wide dispersal movements in New Mexico and the north central portion of the ASNF. Male 1571 was documented travelling with Hoodoo f1550 during the annual helicopter count and capture operation.

Single collared m1572

In January, m1572 was documented making wide dispersal movements in the Coconino National Forest, and through the western and central portions of the ASNF to the eastern portion of the FAIR.

ON THE FAIR:

Baldy Pack (collared AM1347 and mp1672)

In January, mp1672 was documented traveling occasionally with f1560 in the eastern portion of the FAIR. Male pup 1672 was also located in the northeastern portion of ASNF. During the annual helicopter count and capture operation, AM1347 (previously fate unknown) was documented traveling with f1560 and mp1672. AM1347 was captured, re-collared, and released.

Diamond Pack

As of January, the wolves in the Diamond Pack have all been traveling separately for more than three months and are now considered single animals.

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

In January, the Tsay-O-Ah Pack was located within their traditional territory on the FAIR. AF1283 and AM1343 were captured, re-collared, and released during the annual helicopter count and capture operation.

Single m1559

In January, m1559 made large dispersal movements in the eastern portion of the FAIR and was documented traveling with an uncollared wolf (now known as f1679).

Single f1560

In January, 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 January, f1679 was first documented as an uncollared wolf traveling with m1559 in the eastern portion of the FAIR. Female 1679 was captured, collared, and released during the annual helicopter count and capture operation.

IN NEW MEXICO:

Copper Creek Pack (collared M1386)

During January, M1386 was documented traveling in the western portion of the Gila National Forest (GNF), in traditional Copper Creek Pack territory. During the annual helicopter count and capture operation, the IFT documented F1444 traveling with M1386.

Dark Canyon Pack (collared F1456 and M1354)

During January, F1456 and M1354 were documented traveling together within the west central portion of the GNF.

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

During January, 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 in January, and was located in the east portion of the Gila Wilderness. The IFT captured, re-collared and released AF1278 during the annual helicopter count and capture operation.

Lava Pack (collared AF1405 and AM1285)

During January, the Lava Pack was located within their traditional territory in the southeastern portion of the GNF. AF1405 was captured, re-collared, and released during the annual helicopter count and capture operation.

Leopold Pack (collared AM1293, AF1346, and m1561)

During January, the IFT documented the Leopold Pack within their territory in the northern portion of the Gila Wilderness. During January, m1561 made dispersal movements around the GNF. Male 1561 was captured, re-collared, and released during the annual helicopter count and capture operation.

Luna Pack (collared AM1158, AF1487, and fp1684)

During January, the Luna Pack remained in their traditional territory in the north central portion of the GNF. Female pup 1684 was captured, collared, and released during the annual helicopter count and capture operation.

Mangas Pack (collared AM1296, AF1439, and fp1664)

During January, the Mangas Pack was located within their territory in the northwestern portion of the GNF. Female pup 1664 was captured by a private trapper in the northwestern portion of the GNF. The IFT processed, collared, provided veterinary treatment for a foot injury, and released the wolf. During the annual helicopter count and capture operation, fp1664 was recaptured to provide additional veterinary treatment for the foot injury and is being temporarily held in captivity. AM1296 was captured, re-collared, and released.

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

During January, the Prieto Pack was located within their traditional territory in the north central portion of the GNF. During the annual helicopter count and capture operation, mp1678 was captured, collared, and released.

San Mateo Pack (collared AF1399 and fp1578)

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

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

During January, the SBP Pack continued to use their traditional territory in the north central portion of the GNF. During the annual helicopter count and capture operation, AF1553 and fp1682 were captured, collared, and released.

Single collared AM1155

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

Single collared M1453

In January, M1453 was documented traveling with two uncollared wolves (one now known as f1685) in the Cibola National Forest (CNF).

Single collared m1486

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

Single collared M1552

During January, M1552 was not located by the IFT.

Single collared m1569

During January, m1569 traveled throughout the central and northern portion of the CNF.

Single collared f1685

During the annual helicopter count and capture operation, f1685 was captured, collared, and

released. Female 1685 was documented traveling with M1453 and an uncollared wolf in the western portion of the CNF.

MORTALITIES

There were no documented mortalities in the month of January.

INCIDENTS

During the month of January, there were seven confirmed wolf depredation incidents on livestock and one confirmed wolf depredation on a domestic dog. There were 3 nuisance incidents investigated. From January 1 to January 31, 2018 there have been a total of five confirmed depredation incidents in New Mexico and three confirmed depredation incidents in Arizona.

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

On January 8, Wildlife Services investigated a domestic dog killed at a residence in Greenlee County, AZ. The investigation determined the dog was a confirmed wolf kill. The IFT responded to the location and initiated trapping efforts in attempt to capture and identify the wolves involved with the depredation. No wolves were captured. The IFT confirmed there were no wolves with functional radio collars and no known wolf packs in the area at the time of the incident. No residents were present when the incident occurred. The IFT initiated monitoring efforts in the area that remain ongoing at the time of this writing. The IFT has advised residents in the area of their legal rights under provisions in the Federal Final 2015 10(j) rule to protect domestic dogs and livestock from wolves. Private land owners or their designee can shoot wolves that are in the act of biting, killing, or wounding domestic animals (livestock or non-feral dogs) on non-federal land (private, tribal, or state land). Any form of take must be reported within 24 hours to the Mexican Wolf Recovery Program, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service by telephone 505-346-2525; or fax 505-346-2542.

On January 10, Wildlife Services investigated a dead calf in Apache County, AZ. The investigation determined the calf was a confirmed wolf kill.

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

On January 14, Wildlife Services investigated a dead cow in Catron County, NM. The investigation determined the cow was a confirmed wolf kill.

On January 15, Wildlife Services investigated a dead calf in Catron County, NM. The investigation determined the calf was a confirmed wolf kill.

On January 15, Wildlife Services investigated three dead cows in Catron County, NM. The

investigation determined the cause of death for all three cows was unknown.

On January 22, the IFT received a report of a two wolves observed near an occupied residence in Catron County, NM. The IFT confirmed the animals were wolves by a photograph taken. By the time the IFT received report of the incident, the wolves had left the area.

On January 24, the IFT received a report of wolves observed feeding on a deer behind a residence in Greenlee County, AZ. The IFT responded, conducted a site investigation and determined the sighting was probable wolf. The IFT initiated ongoing monitoring efforts in the area. At the time of writing, there have been no additional confirmed wolf sightings in the area.

On January 25, Wildlife Services investigated a dead bull in Catron County, NM. The investigation determined the bull was a confirmed wolf kill.

On January 31, Wildlife Services investigated a dead cow in Catron County, NM. The investigation determined the cow was a confirmed wolf kill.

COMMUNICATION AND COORDINATION

On January 9, WMAT personnel presented during a radio show on KNNB in Whiteriver, AZ.

PROJECT PERSONNEL

In January, two tribal youth started an internship with WMAT.

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.