



Mexican Wolf Recovery Program Monthly Update

January 1-31, 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

Due to the Federal government shutdown that lasted from December 22, 2018 until January 28, 2019, the Mexican Wolf Recovery Program Monthly Update for December did not include any project information for the State of New Mexico. The January Monthly Update will include project information from New Mexico for December and January. The shutdown also resulted in a delay of the annual helicopter count and capture operation by 18 days, however; the count will be conducted in February within the appropriate timeframe.

During the month of December, USFWS met with the San Carlos Apache Tribe, White Mountain Apache Tribe, and Zuni Departments of Game and Fish.

The captive reared Mexican wolf that escaped from a wildlife center in Divide, Colorado, on Nov 11, 2018, was captured near the center on December 12, 2018 and is being held for veterinary care at the Rio Grande Zoo in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

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

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 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. Year-end population counts for 2018 continued during the month of January.

At the end of January, there were 25 packs (11 in AZ and 14 in NM) and seven single collared wolves. There were 76 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 and f1683)

In January, 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 and the FAIR.

Eagle Creek Pack (collared M1477)

In January, the IFT continued to document M1477 traveling with an uncollared wolf in a territory in the east central portion of the ASNF.

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

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

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

In January, the Hoodoo Pack was located within their traditional territory in the northeastern portion of the ASNF. Hoodoo m1677 was documented making dispersal movements in New Mexico and the central portion of the ASNF.

Pine Spring Pack (collared AM1394, AF1562, fp1794, and fp1825)

In January, 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.

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

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

Saffel Pack (collared AM1441, AF1567, and fp1792)

In January, the Saffel Pack was located within their territory in the northeastern portion of the ASNF.

Sierra Blanca Pack (collared M1571 and F1550)

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

Single collared F1489

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

Single collared M1574

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

Single collared AM1382

In January, the IFT documented AM1382, of the Panther Creek Pack, traveling in the east central portion of the ASNF.

Single collared f1686

In January, the IFT documented yearling f1686 continued to make dispersal movements within the eastern portion of the ASNF.

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

In January, 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 January, the Maverick Pack was located within their traditional territory in the eastern portion of the FAIR and east central portion of the ASNF.

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

In January, the Tsay-O-Ah Pack was located within their traditional territory and occasionally documented north of their territory on the FAIR.

Single collared F1679

In January, F1679 of the Tu dil hil Pack was documented traveling in the eastern portion of the FAIR. F1679 was occasionally documented on the SCAR.

Single collared M1824

In January, M1824 was documented traveling in the northwestern portion of the Gila National Forest in New Mexico.

IN NEW MEXICO:**Copper Creek Pack (F1444)**

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

Dark Canyon Pack (collared AM1354 and AF1456)

During December and January, the Dark Canyon Pack was documented traveling together within their traditional territory, in the west central portion of the Gila National Forest (GNF).

Datil Mountain Pack (collared F1685)

During December, the Datil Mountain Pack traveled within their traditional territory. In January, the Datil Mountain Pack male, M1453, was confirmed dead. The incident is currently under investigation. F1685 continued to travel in the western portion of the Cibola National Forest (CNF).

Frieborn Pack (collared AF1443 and fp1702)

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

Hawks Nest Pack

During early December F1473 traveled within their traditional territory. In late December, the Hawks Nest Pack female, F1473, was confirmed dead. The incident is currently under investigation. With the death of F1473 and the death of AM1038 in November, the Hawks Nest pack is considered defunct and will not be reported on in future updates.

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

During December and 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. M1556 was captured by a private trapper, processed and released.

Lava Pack (collared AM1285 and AF1405)

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

Leopold Pack (collared AM1293 and AF1346)

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

Luna Pack (collared AM1158, AF1487, and f1684)

During December and January, the Luna Pack remained in their traditional territory in the north central portion of the GNF. Sub-adult female, f1684, continued to travel in the southeastern portion of the GNF.

Mangas Pack (collared AM1296, AF1439, and f1705)

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

Prieto Pack (collared AM1398, AF1251, m1678, and mp1827)

During December and January, the Prieto Pack was located within their traditional territory in the north central portion of the GNF. In December, the IFT was notified that two wolves were potentially traveling with traps from a private trapper on their feet. A helicopter capture was immediately initiated and F1565 and m1669 were captured. F1565 and m1669 were placed under veterinary care. Unfortunately, F1565 died the first night under veterinary care. This case is under investigation. Male 1669 was transferred to the Rio Grande Zoo Veterinary Clinic for continued care, but the injuries sustained required the amputation of the leg. On January 23, M1669 was moved to Sevilleta Wolf Management Facility. The IFT has also documented m1678 traveling with the SBP pack in December and January. The IFT established a diversionary food cache for the Prieto Pack to reduce potential for conflict with livestock in January.

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

During December and January, the San Mateo Pack continued to utilize their territory in the north central portion of the GNF. Collared female f1578 has been traveling with single m1824 in the north central portion of the GNF.

Sheepherders Baseball Park (SBP) Pack (collared AF1553)

During December and January, AF1553 was confirmed traveling with Prieto m1678 in the traditional territory of the SBP pack in the north central portion of the GNF.

Squirrel Springs Pack (collared F1788 and M1349)

During December and January, the Squirrel Springs pack was located in the north central portion of the GNF. The IFT responded to a male wolf caught by a private trapper in December within the Squirrel Springs territory. The IFT confirmed the wolf was M1349, a formerly missing wolf from 2014, and successfully collared and released the wolf. M1349 is now considered a member of the Squirrel Springs pack.

Single collared M1673

During December and January, M1673 was not located.

MORTALITIES

During the month of December, the following wolves in New Mexico were confirmed mortalities: F1565 of the Prieto Pack and F1473 of the Hawks Nest Pack. Both incidents are under investigation by USFWS Law Enforcement.

During the month of January, M1453 of the Datil Mountain Pack was located dead in New Mexico; the incident is under investigation.

From January 1, 2018 to December 31, 2018, there were a total of 21 documented wolf mortalities.

INCIDENTS

During the month of December 2018, there were two confirmed depredation incidents on livestock. In January 2019, there were 18 confirmed wolf depredation incidents on livestock. There was one nuisance incident in January.

From January 1, 2018 to December 31, 2018 there were a total of 68 confirmed wolf depredation incidents in New Mexico and 31 confirmed wolf depredation incidents in Arizona.

On December 16, Wildlife Services investigated a dead calf in Catron County, NM. The investigation determined the calf was a confirmed wolf kill.

On December 22, Wildlife Services investigated a dead cow in Catron County, NM. The investigation determined the cow was a confirmed wolf kill.

On January 5, Wildlife Services investigated a dead calf in Catron County, NM. 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 18, Wildlife Services investigated a dead calf in Catron County, NM. The investigation determined the calf was a confirmed wolf kill.

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

On January 24, the IFT took a report of an elk calf killed by wolves near a residence in Nutrioso, AZ. The reporting party saw two uncollared wolves on the elk carcass. The animals ran off when the reporting party drove a vehicle toward them. The IFT removed the carcass from the property to eliminate further attractant to wolves.

On January 27, Wildlife Services investigated separately a dead cow and a dead calf in Catron County, NM. The investigations determined both were confirmed wolf kills.

On January 28, Wildlife Services conducted six investigations: three dead cows and three dead calves in Catron County, NM. The investigations determined four were confirmed wolf kills, one calf was a coyote kill and one died of unknown causes.

On January 30, Wildlife Services investigated separately five dead calves in Catron County, NM. The investigations determined all five calves were confirmed wolf kills.

On January 31, Wildlife Services investigated a dead calf and an injured cow in Apache County, AZ. The investigation concluded the calf was a probable dog kill and the injuries caused to the cow were confirmed to have been caused by dogs.

On January 31, Wildlife Services investigated separately two dead cows and a dead calf in Catron County, NM. The investigations determined all three were confirmed wolf kills.

COMMUNICATION AND COORDINATION

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

In January, WMAT provided an article on the WMAT Mexican Wolf Tribal Youth Conservation Program in the Native American Fish and Wildlife Society newsletter.

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.