



Mexican Wolf Reintroduction Project Monthly Update

March 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 (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> 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 March 24, 2018 Sherry Barrett retired from the position of Mexican Wolf Recovery Coordinator for the USFWS. The IFT thanks Sherry for her leadership and dedication to Mexican wolf recovery efforts during her 7 years as coordinator. The Mexican Wolf Recovery Coordinator position will be filled by temporary acting assignments until a new coordinator is hired.

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. 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 March, there were 75 wolves with functioning radio collars that the IFT was actively monitoring.

IN ARIZONA:

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

In March, the Bear Wallow Pack was located within their traditional territory on the east central portion of the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest (ASNF), and occasionally documented on the SCAR. Female pup 1683 made dispersal movements north of Bear Wallow’s traditional territory, but rejoined the pack by the end of the month.

Bluestem Pack (collared f1686)

In March, the IFT documented Bluestem in the pack’s traditional territory in the central portion of the ASNF. Yearling female 1686 was captured, collared, and released on site.

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

In March, 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 March, 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 March, the Hoodoo Pack was located within their traditional territory in the northeastern portion of the ASNF. The IFT hazed the Hoodoo Pack several times this month in the Nutrioso area to deter them from frequenting areas with residences. Sub-adult f1550 was documented traveling apart from the Hoodoo Pack with m1571 in the month of March.

Maverick Pack (collared AF1291)

In March, 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 March, the Panther Creek Pack was located in their traditional territory in the east central portion of the ASNF. The members of the pack have been traveling separately. Sub-adult m1574 has been occasionally documented traveling on the SCAR.

Pine Spring Pack (collared F1562 and AM1394)

In March, 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 March, the Prime Canyon Pack continued to travel within a territory in the east central portion of the ASNF.

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

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

Single collared m1477

In March, m1477 was documented in the east central portion of the ASNF.

Single collared F1489

In March, F1489 was documented traveling in the east central portion of the ASNF.

Single collared m1571

In March, m1571 was documented in the north central portion of the ASNF. Sub-adult m1571 has been documented traveling with Hoodoo f1550 during the month of March.

Single collared m1673

In March, m1673 made wide dispersal movements into New Mexico and has been documented traveling in the south central portion of the ASNF.

ON THE FAIR:

Baldy Pack (collared AM1347 and mp1672)

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

Single collared wolf m1559

In March, m1559 was documented traveling in the eastern portion of the FAIR with f1679, and occasionally using the SCAR.

Single collared wolf f1560

In March, 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 March, f1679 was documented traveling with m1559 in the eastern portion of the FAIR, and occasionally using the SCAR.

IN NEW MEXICO:

Copper Creek Pack (collared AM1386)

During March, the Copper Creek Pack was documented traveling in the western portion of the Gila National Forest (GNF), within the pack's traditional territory. In March, AM1386 was located dead in New Mexico. The incident is under investigation.

Dark Canyon Pack (collared AF1456 and AM1354)

During March, 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 March, the Iron Creek Pack continued to utilize their territory in the northern portion of the Gila Wilderness and the southern portion of the GNF.

Lava Pack (collared AF1405 and AM1285)

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

Leopold Pack (collared AM1293, AF1346, and m1561)

During March, 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 March, 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 March, the Mangas Pack was located within their territory in the northwestern portion of the GNF. The IFT initiated and maintained a diversionary food cache for the Mangas Pack to reduce potential for livestock conflict. The IFT documented three uncollared wolves with the Mangas Pack

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

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

Single collared AM1038

During March, AM1038 of the old Hawks Nest Pack continued to travel with f1473 in north central portions of the GNF.

Single collared AM1155

During March, AM1155 of the old Morgart's Pack was not located by the IFT.

Single collared M1453

In March, M1453 was documented traveling within the western portion of Cibola National Forest (CNF) with f1685.

Single collared f1473

During March, f1473 was documented traveling in north central portions of the GNF with AM1038.

Single collared m1486

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

Single collared m1569

During March, m1569 traveled widely in New Mexico and was located dead. The incident is under investigation.

Single collared f1685

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

MORTALITIES

In March, M1386 was located dead in New Mexico. The incident is under investigation.

In March, m1569 was located dead in New Mexico. The incident is under investigation.

From January 1 to March 31, 2018 there have been a total of four documented wolf mortalities.

INCIDENTS

During the month of March, there were 11 confirmed wolf depredation incidents on livestock. There were five nuisance incidents investigated in March, three of which were confirmed as wolf by the IFT. From January 1 to March 31, 2018 there have been a total of 22 confirmed wolf depredation incidents in New Mexico and 4 confirmed wolf depredation incidents in Arizona.

On March 4, Wildlife Services investigated a dead calf in Sierra County, NM. The investigation determined the calf was a confirmed wolf kill.

On March 4, Wildlife Services investigated a dead calf in Socorro County, NM. The investigation determined the calf was a confirmed wolf kill.

On March 6, Wildlife Services investigated a dead cow in Greenlee County, AZ. The investigation determined the cow was a confirmed wolf kill.

On March 6, WMAT investigated an injured calf on the FAIR. The investigation determined the probable cause of injury to be wolf.

On March 8, Wildlife Services investigated two dead cows on the SCAR. The investigations determined both cows were confirmed wolf kills.

On March 8, the IFT investigated reports of three wolves feeding on a dead elk in the Chapache housing area in Alpine. The IFT responded and located two recently killed elk in an open field near several houses. The wolves had left by the time the IFT had arrived. The IFT learned that the wolves were scared away when a homeowner walked out of their house. The remains of the elk carcass were removed from the area to eliminate the attractant of wolves returning to the area. Other homeowners in the area were contacted by the IFT and advised 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 harassment or shooting of Mexican wolves 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 March 9, WMAT investigated a dead heifer on the FAIR. The investigation determined the cow died of unknown causes.

On March 11, Wildlife Services investigated a dead calf in Catron County, NM. The investigation determined the calf was a confirmed wolf kill.

On March 12, Wildlife Services investigated a dead calf in Greenlee County, AZ. The investigation determined the calf was killed by coyotes.

On March 12, the IFT took a report of a dead elk in Nutrioso near Hulsey Creek. The IFT investigated the carcass and did not have any evidence to confirm that the elk had been killed by wolves. There were no GPS points from wolves in the area during the time when the elk would have died. The carcass was removed from the area.

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

On March 14, the IFT took a nuisance report of wolves coming into a camp north of Alpine. The reporting party indicated they had heard howling close to their camp and thought animals may have come into their camp at night while sleeping. The IFT confirmed from GPS points that the Elk Horn Pack was in the area that night, but did not have evidence to corroborate that wolves had come into the camp.

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

On March 17, Wildlife Services investigated a dead cow in Catron County, NM. The investigation determined the cow was a confirmed wolf kill.

On March 17, Wildlife Services investigated a dead cow in Catron County, NM. The investigation determined the cow was a probable wolf kill.

On March 18, Wildlife Services investigated a dead bull in Catron County, NM. The investigation determined the cow died from unknown causes.

On March 20, the IFT received a report that wolves had killed an elk in Dry Valley in Nutrioso. The IFT responded to the area and confirmed the Hoodoo Pack had killed an elk in the area approximately 100 yards from the nearest residence. While in the area, several people were contacted who reported seeing wolves on the elk carcass and traveling back into the forest that morning. The remnants of the elk carcass were removed to eliminate further attractant of wolves to the area. Because this was the second confirmed elk kill this month by the Hoodoo pack in proximity to houses, the IFT initiated multiple and sustained hazing efforts on members of the Hoodoo pack in effort to increase their aversion to areas with human presence. Several residents in the area were also issued less than lethal rounds to use to haze any wolves that return to the area of Dry Valley.

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

On March 23, WMAT investigated a dead cow on the FAIR. The investigation determined the cow died of unknown causes.

On March 23, Wildlife Services investigated a dead cow in Apache County, AZ. The investigation determined the cow died of unknown causes.

On March 27, Wildlife Services investigated a dead cow in Catron County, NM. The investigation determined the cow was a confirmed wolf kill.

On March 30, Wildlife Services investigated an injured domestic dog in Greenlee County, AZ. The investigation confirmed the dog's injuries were caused by wolves several days prior. The IFT responded to the area on the following day and initiated monitoring efforts in the area that remain ongoing at the time of this writing. 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.

On March 30, Wildlife Services investigated an injured calf in Greenlee County, AZ. The investigation confirmed the calf's injuries were caused by wolves.

COMMUNICATION AND COORDINATION

On March 15, WMAT presented at an Integrated Natural Resources Group meeting in Whiteriver, AZ.

On March 22, WMAT presented to BIA Fort Apache Fire Management personnel in Whiteriver, AZ.

PROJECT PERSONNEL

There are no project personnel updates for March.

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.