



## **Mexican Wolf Recovery Program Monthly Update**

March 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](http://azgfd.gov/wolf) or by visiting the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service website at [fws.gov/southwest/es/mexicanwolf](http://fws.gov/southwest/es/mexicanwolf). For information on the FAIR, call (928) 338-4385 ext. 226 or visit [wmatoutdoor.org](http://wmatoutdoor.org). Past updates may be viewed at these websites. Interested parties may [sign up](#) to receive this update electronically by visiting [azgfd.com](http://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**

As part of the March 29, 2018 appropriations bills, the U.S. Congress directed the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to obtain an independent assessment on the taxonomic validity of the Mexican gray wolf. The National Academy of Science's report was published in March, 2019. The report confirmed the taxonomy of Mexican wolves as a valid subspecies and further determined that there is no evidence that the Mexican gray wolf genome include introgression from domestic dogs.

**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 end of year census for 2018 was a minimum of 131 Mexican wolves in the wild (64 in AZ and 67 in NM). This was about a 12% increase in the population from a minimum of 117 wolves counted at the end of 2017.** 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 March, there were 27 packs (13 in AZ and 14 in NM) and six single collared wolves. There were 80 wolves with functioning radio collars that the IFT was actively monitoring. Not all of the wolves are collared. Studbook numbers following individual pack names below denote wolves with functioning radio collars.

### **IN ARIZONA:**

#### **Eagle Creek Pack (collared M1477)**

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

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

In March, the Hoodoo Pack was located within their traditional territory in the northeastern portion of the ASNF. The Hoodoo Pack was hazed by the IFT on multiple occasions during the month of March to mitigate wolf-livestock conflict on private land. The IFT also established a diversionary

food cache to reduce potential for wolf-livestock conflict with this pack.

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

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 for this pack to reduce potential for wolf-livestock conflict.

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

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

**Rocky Prairie Pack (collared F1489)**

In March, the IFT documented F1489 traveling separately from M1829 in the north and east central portion of the ASNF.

**Saffel Pack (collared AM1441, AF1567, fp1792 and fp1833)**

In March, the Saffel Pack was located within their territory in the northeastern portion of the ASNF. The Saffel Pack was hazed on multiple occasions to mitigate wolf-livestock conflict near private land.

**Sierra Blanca Pack (collared M1571 and F1550)**

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

**Single collared f1683**

In March, f1683 was documented traveling in the east central portion of the ASNF and occasionally on the FAIR.

**Single collared AM1382**

In March, AM1382 of the Panther Creek Pack was not located. AM1382 was last documented in February, travelling with f1683 of the Bear Wallow Pack in the east central portion of the ASNF and occasionally on the FAIR.

**Single collared M1574**

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

**Single collared f1686**

In March, the IFT documented yearling f1686 continuing to make dispersal movements within the north central portion of the Gila National Forest (GNF) in New Mexico and the eastern portion of the ASNF.

**Single collared M1829**

In late March, M1829 was documented making large movements into the western portion of the GNF in New Mexico.

## **ON THE FAIR:**

### **Baldy Pack (collared AM1347 and F1560)**

In March, the Baldy Pack was documented traveling in the north central portion of the ASNF.

### **Maverick Pack (collared AF1291 and fp1828)**

In March, 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 and AF1283)**

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

### **Tu dil hil Pack (collared F1679 and AM1338)**

In March, the Tu dil hil Pack was documented traveling in the eastern portion of the FAIR. AM1338, formerly of the Bear Wallow Pack, has been documented consistently traveling with F1679 and now meets criteria for being considered part of the Tu dil hil Pack.

### **Poker Pack (collared F1674)**

In March, F1674 was documented traveling separately from Tsay-O-Ah pack on the eastern FAIR and occasionally on the SCAR. F1674 was documented traveling with an uncollared wolf for a period of time that meets the criteria for being consider a new pack.

## **IN NEW MEXICO:**

### **Copper Creek Pack (F1444)**

During March 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 March, 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 March, 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. F1685 was documented traveling with Iron Creek M1821 for most of March.

### **Frieborn Pack (collared AF1443 and fp1702)**

During March, 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, f1670, m1821, fp1721, mp1710 and fp1712)**

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. In March, M1556 was located dead in New Mexico; the incident is under investigation.

**Lava Pack (collared AM1285, AF1405, and mp1715)**

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

**Leon Pack (single collared M1824 and f1578)**

In March, M1824 was documented traveling with San Mateo f1578 in the northwestern portion of the Gila National Forest in New Mexico. They have been named the Leon Pack.

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

During March, 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 March, the Luna Pack remained in their traditional territory in the north central portion of the GNF.

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

During March, the Mangas Pack was located within their territory in the northwestern portion of the GNF. The IFT continued to maintain a diversionary food cache for the Mangas Pack to reduce potential conflict with livestock in March.

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

During March, the Prieto Pack was located within their traditional territory in the north central portion of the GNF. During March, fp1835 and fp1836 were captured and removed to captivity as part of a management order. The IFT continued to maintain a diversionary food cache for the Prieto Pack to reduce potential for conflict with livestock in March.

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

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

**Shepherders Baseball Park (SBP) Pack (collared AF1553)**

During March, 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 March, the Squirrel Springs Pack was located in the north central portion of the GNF.

**Single F1684**

During March F1684 was located traveling with M1827 of the Prieto Pack in the north central portion of the GNF.

## **MORTALITIES**

During the month of March, M1556 of the Iron Creek Pack was located dead in New Mexico. Single M1677 was also located dead in Arizona during March. Both incidents are under investigation.

From January 1, 2019 to March 31, 2019, there have been a total of six documented wolf mortalities.

## **INCIDENTS**

During the month of March, there were 20 confirmed wolf depredation incidents on livestock and one confirmed wolf depredation on a dog. There was one nuisance incident investigated in March. From January 1, 2019 to March 31, 2019 there have been a total of 42 confirmed and three probable wolf depredation incidents in New Mexico and five confirmed depredation incidents in Arizona.

On March 3, Wildlife Services investigated a dead calf in Catron County, NM. The investigation determined the calf was a confirmed wolf depredation.

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

On March 6, Wildlife Services investigated a dead dog in Catron County, NM. The investigation determined the dog was a confirmed wolf depredation.

On March 9, Wildlife Services investigated a dead calf and two dead cows in Catron County, NM. The investigations determined that the calf and one cow were confirmed wolf depredations. The cause of death for the second cow was unknown.

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

On March 12, Wildlife Services investigated a dead calf in Catron County, NM. The investigation determined the calf was a confirmed wolf depredation.

On March 14, Wildlife Services investigated two dead cows in Catron County, NM. The investigation determined both cows were confirmed wolf depredations.

On March 19, Wildlife Services investigated four dead cows in Catron County, NM. The investigations determined three cows were confirmed wolf depredations, one cow died from unknown cause.

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

On March 22, the IFT took a report of an elk killed by wolves next to a house near Alpine, AZ. The IFT investigated the report and determined wolves from the Hoodoo Pack had killed a cow elk overnight within 50 feet of the residence. The carcass was removed to eliminate any attractant

to wolves returning to the area.

On March 23, Wildlife Services investigated an injured horse that later died from injuries in Catron County, NM. The investigation determined the horse was a confirmed wolf depredation.

On March 24, Wildlife Services investigated a dead calf in Catron County, NM. The investigation determined the calf was a confirmed wolf depredation.

On March 25, Wildlife Services investigated a dead bull and a dead calf in Catron County, NM. The investigations determined the bull and calf were both confirmed wolf depredations.

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

On March 27, Wildlife Services investigated a dead cow and calf in Greenlee County, AZ. The investigation determined the two animals were confirmed as having been killed by wolves and classified as one depredation incident.

On March 28, Wildlife Services investigated three dead cows in Catron County, NM. The investigation determined one cow was a confirmed wolf depredation and two were probable wolf depredations.

On March 28, Wildlife Services investigated a colt that was injured and later euthanized in Apache County, AZ. The investigation determined the colt was a confirmed wolf depredation.

On March 30, Wildlife Services investigated a dead cow in Catron County, NM. The investigation determined the cow was a confirmed wolf depredation.

On March 30, Wildlife Services investigated a dead calf in Apache County, AZ. The investigation determined the calf was a confirmed wolf depredation.

## **COMMUNICATION AND COORDINATION**

The USFWS attended a USFS Forest Leadership Team meeting in Reserve, NM.

The USFWS and AZGFD attended the Mexican Wolf Livestock Council meeting in Springerville, AZ.

In March, WMAT contributed an article to “Nature’s Newsletter”, a publication of the Delaware Valley Eagle Alliance, on the WMAT Mexican Wolf Tribal Youth Conservation Program.

On March 6, 2019, the Alpine Conservation Law Enforcement Officer (CLEO) provided outreach training to students from the University of the Southwest in Hobbs, New Mexico. The Alpine CLEO spoke to criminal justice and vertebrate zoology students providing an overview of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and endangered species to include the Mexican gray wolf.

On March 11, WMAT presented to Canyon Day Cattle Association in Whiteriver, AZ.

### **PROJECT PERSONNEL**

Sara Eno started with USFWS at the end of March. Sara was a part of the IFT as the WMAT Field Team Leader and will be transitioning into the role of the Pinetop biologist for the USFWS. Sara did an outstanding job as the WMAT Field Team Leader and will continue to work with the WMAT and AGFD in her new role. Congratulations Sara!

### **REWARDS OFFERED**

The USFWS is offering a reward of up to \$10,000; the AZGFD 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.