



Mexican Wolf Reintroduction Project Monthly Update

May 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.wmatoutdoor.org. Past updates may be viewed at these websites. Interested parties may [sign up](http://www.azgfd.com) 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>.

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 May 23, Judge Zipps of the United States District Court for the District of Arizona held a hearing in the 10(j) case to discuss both parties' responses to the Court's March 30, 2018 order. An order following this hearing is pending.

On May 31, 2018 the USFWS published in the Federal Register its intent to conduct a 5-year status review under the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended, of 38 animal and plant

species. The Mexican wolf is included as one of the species under review. Section 4(c)(2)(A) of the Endangered Species Act requires the USFWS to review each listed species' status at least once every 5 years. A 5-year status review is based on the best scientific and commercial data available at the time of the review; therefore, the USFWS is requesting submission of any such information that has become available since the last review for each of the 38 species. Please see the Federal Register notice for more information

https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2018-05-31/pdf/2018-11675.pdf?utm_campaign=subscription%20mailing%20list&utm_source=federalregister.gov&utm_medium=email

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. 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 May, there were 73 wolves with functioning radio collars that the IFT was actively monitoring.

IN ARIZONA:

Bear Wallow Pack (collared AM1338, M1676, and f1683)

In May, the IFT documented the Bear Wallow Pack in their traditional territory on the east central portion of the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest (ASNF). Some individuals were occasionally documented on the SCAR. Yearling f1683 and M1676 were documented travelling with AM1338. AF1335 was found dead in May. The incident is under investigation.

Bluestem Pack (collared f1686)

In May, the IFT documented the Bluestem Pack in the pack's traditional territory in the east central portion of the ASNF. Yearling f1686 exhibited behavior and movements suggesting that that animal may be dispersing. The IFT initiated a diversionary food cache in a proactive effort intended to reduce potential for wolf-livestock conflict.

Elk Horn Pack (collared AF1294, f1668, and m1671)

In May, the Elk Horn Pack was located within their traditional territory in the northeastern portion of the ASNF. The IFT maintained a supplemental food cache near the den as part of the cross-foster effort and to reduce the potential for wolf-livestock conflict. The Elk Horn Pack continued to display behavior in May consistent with denning.

Hoodoo Pack (collared AM1290, AF1333, m1666, m1677, and m1681)

In May, the Hoodoo Pack was located within their traditional territory in the northeastern portion of the ASNF. The IFT maintained a diversionary food cache to reduce potential for conflict. The Hoodoo Pack displayed behavior consistent with denning within their traditional territory during May.

Panther Creek Pack (collared AM1382)

In May, the IFT documented the Panther Creek Pack in their traditional territory in the east central portion of the ASNF. AF1339 was found dead in May. The incident is under investigation. After the mortality, AM1382 was documented traveling alone. Sub-adult m1574 continued to travel alone and is now considered a single animal. At the end of May, the pack consisted of only AM1382.

Pine Spring Pack (collared AF1562 and AM1394)

In May, 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. The Pine Spring Pack displayed behavior consistent with denning within their territory during May.

Prime Canyon Pack (collared AF1488 and AM1471)

In May, the IFT documented the Prime Canyon Pack traveling within a territory in the east central portion of the ASNF. AF1488 exhibited behavior and movements consistent with denning. The IFT initiated a diversionary food cache for this pack in a proactive attempt to reduce the potential for conflict near residences.

Saffel Pack (collared AM1441, AF1567, m1661, and m1680)

In May, the Saffel Pack was located in their territory in the northeastern portion of the ASNF. The Saffel Pack displayed behavior consistent with denning within their traditional territory during May.

Sierra Blanca Pack (collared M1571 and F1550)

In May, F1550 of the Hoodoo Pack had localized in the east central portion of the ASNF and has been consistently documented traveling with M1571 formerly of the Diamond Pack.

Single collared M1477

In May, the IFT documented M1477 in the east central portion of the ASNF. This animal has continued to travel with an uncollared wolf. They are now considered a pack and will be given a pack name in June.

Single collared F1489

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

Single collared M1574

In May, the IFT documented M1574 traveling in the east central portion of the ASNF.

ON THE FAIR:

Baldy Pack (collared AM1347, F1560, and m1672)

In May, 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)

In May, the Maverick Pack was located within their traditional territory both on the FAIR and east central portion of the ASNF. They were documented as having produced pups.

Tsay-O-Ah Pack (collared AM1343, AF1283, and f1674)

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

Tu dil hil Pack (collared M1559 and F1679)

In May, the Tu dil hil Pack was documented traveling in the eastern portion of the FAIR.

IN NEW MEXICO:

Copper Creek Pack

During May, the Copper Creek Pack was not located. Currently there are no functioning collars in this pack. Single M1673 was documented traveling within the Copper Creek territory in May. The IFT is monitoring M1673 to determine if it is traveling with the Copper Creek Pack.

Dark Canyon Pack (collared AF1456 and AM1354)

During May, the Dark Canyon Pack was documented traveling together within their traditional territory, in the west central portion of the Gila National Forest (GNF). In May, the IFT, cross-fostered two wild-born pups (one taken from the Iron Creek Pack and one taken from the Lava Pack) into the Dark Canyon den subsequent to cross-foster events of genetically valuable pups from captivity into both the Iron Creek and Lava Packs. One pup from each den was removed during the cross-foster to reduce the litter size in an effort to increase chance of survival for the captive born pups.

Datil Mountain Pack (collared M1453 and F1685)

During May, the Datil Mountain Pack continued to travel in the western portion of the Cibola National Forest (CNF). The Datil Mountain Pack showed signs of denning in early May, however, leading into mid-late May behavior was no longer consistent with denning.

Frieborn Pack (collared AF1443 and AM1447)

In May, the Frieborn Pack was documented within their territory in the east central portion of the ASNF in New Mexico and Arizona. The IFT maintained a food cache near the den as part of the cross-foster effort and to reduce the potential for wolf-livestock conflict. The Frieborn Pack continued to exhibit behavior and movements consistent with denning.

Hawks Nest Pack (collared AM1038 and F1473)

During May, the Hawks Nest Pack continued to travel in the north central portion of the GNF. The pair is now considered the Hawks Nest Pack. The Hawks Nest Pack showed signs of denning in April, however, leading into mid-May they have failed to show behavior consistent with denning.

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

During May, the Iron Creek Pack continued to utilize their territory in the northern portion of the Gila Wilderness and the southern portion of the GNF. The IFT cross-fostered two pups from the Endangered Wolf Center into the Iron Creek den in May. One wild born pup was removed to reduce litter size and increase the chance of survival of the genetically valuable pups. The Iron Creek pup was subsequently cross-fostered into the Dark Canyon Pack den.

Lava Pack (collared AF1405 and AM1285)

During May, the Lava Pack was located within their traditional territory in the southeastern portion of the GNF. The IFT cross-fostered two pups from the Endangered Wolf Center into the Lava den in May. One wild born pup was removed to reduce litter size and increase the chance of survival of the genetically valuable pups. The Lava pup was subsequently cross-fostered into the Dark Canyon pack den.

Leopold Pack (collared AM1293 and AF1346)

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

Luna Pack (collared AM1158, AF1487, and fp1684)

During May, 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 f1664)

During May the Mangas Pack was located within their territory in the northwestern portion of the GNF. The Mangas Pack displayed behavior consistent with denning within their traditional territory. The IFT maintained a diversionary food cache for the Mangas Pack to reduce potential for livestock conflict. The IFT captured, collared and released a previously uncollared juvenile female wolf (f1705).

Prieto Pack (collared AF1251, AM1398, F1565, m1669, and m1678)

During May, the Prieto Pack was located within their traditional territory in the north central portion of the GNF. The IFT documented a minimum of 2 pups with the Prieto Pack.

San Mateo Pack (collared AF1399 and f1578)

During May, the San Mateo Pack continued to utilize their territory in the north central portion of the GNF. The IFT documented behavior consistent with denning for the San Mateo Pack in late April and documented a minimum of 6 pups in May.

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

During May, the SBP Pack continued to use their traditional territory in the north central portion of the GNF. AM1284, mp1667 and fp1682 were not located in May.

Single collared AM1155

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

Single collared M1486

During May, M1486 traveled throughout the northern and central portions of the CNF.

Single collared M1561

During May, M1561 was captured by the IFT north of I-40 in Arizona and translocated back into its natal pack territory in NM. M1561 has remained in NM since the translocation.

Single collared M1673

During May, M1673 traveled throughout the southern portion of the GNF, largely within the Copper Creek Pack territory.

MORTALITIES

In May, AF1335 of the Bear Wallow Pack and AF1339 of the Panther Creek Pack were located dead in Arizona. Both mortalities are under investigation. From January 1, 2018 to May 31, 2018 there have been a total of 6 documented wolf mortalities.

INCIDENTS

During the month of May, there were 14 confirmed wolf depredation incidents on livestock. There were 5 nuisance incidents investigated in May. From January 1 to May 31, 2018 there have been a total of 39 confirmed wolf depredation incidents in New Mexico and 17 confirmed wolf depredation incidents in Arizona.

On May 6 and 11, the IFT investigated reports of two elk killed by wolves in Alpine. The IFT investigated and determined both elk were killed by wolves from the Prime Canyon Pack. On May 12, an elk was killed in Nutrioso by wolves from the Elk Horn Pack. There were no interactions between humans and wolves during any of these incidents. All elk carcasses were removed from private lands. Concentrations of elk feeding in pasture land in these communities have remained high during this spring due to the forage in the wet meadows as compared with dry conditions on the adjacent ASNF. The IFT encourages all residents to report any wolf sightings in proximity to residences by calling the phone number listed above. The IFT continued active hazing efforts of wolves in these areas and maintaining diversionary food caches to disrupt documented patterns of wolves regularly using areas inhabited by humans. At the time this report was prepared, there have been no additional reports of elk killed by wolves in either of these communities.

On May 8, the IFT investigated a report of an interaction between a wolf and a dog at a residence in Alpine that reportedly had to be broken up by the owner of the dog. The report was determined to be unfounded.

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

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

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

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

On May 15, Wildlife Services investigated an injured calf in Catron County, NM. The investigation determined the injured calf was confirmed wolf.

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

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

On May 22, Wildlife Services investigated a dead calf in Greenlee County, AZ. The investigation determined the calf was a confirmed wolf kill.

On May 23, Wildlife Services investigated a dead cow in Apache County, AZ. The investigation determined the cow was a confirmed wolf kill.

On May 23, Wildlife Services investigated a dead calf in Apache County, AZ. The investigation determined the calf was a confirmed wolf kill.

On May 24, the IFT received a report from a turkey hunter who observed a collared wolf from his camp on national forest near Hannagan Meadow three times during a three hour period on May 21, 2018. The hunter reported that in the early morning hours he first saw the wolf at a distance of approximately 150 yards away from the camp. The wolf left, then returned 30 minutes later and was observed approximately 25 yards from the camp. The wolf left the area on its own, then returned a third time and was observed approximately 40 yards away around 9:00AM. During this interaction the hunter never yelled or did anything to scare the wolf away. The hunter was alone at the camp and there were no dogs present in camp. The hunter indicated there was food present at the camp but he was not cooking at the time the wolf was observed. The IFT confirmed this interaction involved a collared Mexican wolf from photographs taken during the incident.

On May 25, Wildlife Services investigated a dead cow in Catron County, NM. The investigation determined the cow was killed by a bear.

On May 26, Wildlife Services investigated a dead calf in Apache County, AZ. The investigation determined the calf had been killed by coyotes.

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

On May 28, Wildlife Services investigated a dead calf in Catron County, NM. The investigation determined the calf was a confirmed wolf kill.

On May 29, Wildlife Services investigated a dead cow in Catron County, NM. The investigation determined the cow was a confirmed wolf kill.

On May 29, Wildlife Services investigated a dead calf in Greenlee County, AZ. The investigation determined the calf was a confirmed wolf kill.

On May 30, Wildlife Services investigated a dead cow in Catron County, NM. The investigation determined the cow was killed by a bear.

On May 30, Wildlife Services investigated a dead cow in Catron County, NM. The investigation concluded the cause of death was unknown.

COMMUNICATION AND COORDINATION

On May 2, USFWS presented to various tribes at the New Mexico Tribal Fish, Wildlife, and ESA Conservation Meeting.

On May 8, WMAT presented to the Boys and Girls Club in Whiteriver, AZ

On May 8, WMAT presented to WMAT Forestry Department in Canyon Day, AZ.

On May 10, WMAT presented to the Boys and Girls Club in Whiteriver, AZ

On May 16, the IFT gave a presentation on Mexican wolf biology, management and reintroduction efforts to a group of 6th grade children from Winslow, AZ at their annual camping trip on the ASNF.

On May 17, the Mexican Wolf/Livestock Council met in Springerville, AZ.

On May 24, WMAT presented at Whiteriver Elementary in Whiteriver, AZ.

PROJECT PERSONNEL

There are no project personnel updates for the month of May.

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.