



Mexican Wolf Reintroduction Project Monthly Update

August 1 - 31, 2017

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. Past updates may be viewed on either website. 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/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. 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 Update

The Fish and Wildlife Service met with the Mexican Wolf Tribal Working Group in Albuquerque, NM on August 16 to discuss the draft Mexican Wolf Recovery Plan.

The Mexican Wolf Recovery Program and the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program met with the Natural Resource Conservation Service on August 17 to discuss conservation programs for the Mexican wolf.

The Fish and Wildlife Service met with Mexican wolf partner agencies in Springerville, AZ on August 22 to discuss the draft Mexican Wolf Recovery Plan Implementation Strategy.

The Fish and Wildlife Service held a conference call with Mexico's National Commission of Natural Protected Areas (CONANP by its Spanish acronym) on August 28 to discuss the Mexican Wolf Recovery Plan Implementation Strategy.

The public comment period for the draft Mexican Wolf Recovery Plan closed August 29.

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) indicate wolves younger than 24 months or pups. The capital letter "A" preceding the letter and number indicate 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

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.

During annual year-end population counts, the IFT documented a minimum of 113 Mexican wolves in the wild in Arizona and New Mexico at the end of 2016. At the end of August, there were 60 wolves with functioning radio collars that the IFT was actively monitoring.

Wolves with functioning radio collars are listed by studbook number in the pack updates below.

IN ARIZONA:

Bear Wallow Pack (collared AM1338 and AF1335)

In August, the Bear Wallow Pack was located within their traditional territory on the SCAR and in the east central portion of the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest (ASNF). The pack displayed localized behavior consistent with pup rearing and use of rendezvous sites. A minimum of three

pups were documented with the Bear Wallow Pack in August; however this number may change as the IFT continues to document observations of this pack.

Bluestem Pack (collared F1489, f1563 and fp1665)

In August, the Bluestem Pack continued to use their traditional territory in the east central portion of the ASNF. The pack continued to display localized behavior consistent with pup rearing. The IFT documented a minimum of four pups with use of remote camera during the month of August. A female pup, fp1665 was captured, collared and released and continued to travel with the pack.

Elk Horn Pack (collared AF1294, m1471, m1474, and f1473)

In August, the Elk Horn Pack was located within their traditional territory in the north eastern portion of the ASNF. The pack continued to display localized behavior consistent with pup rearing during the month of August.

Frieborn Pack (collared F1443 and m1447)

In August, the Frieborn Pack was documented within their territory in the east central portion of the ASNF in Arizona and into New Mexico. The pack continued to display localized behavior consistent with pup rearing in August.

Hawks Nest Pack (collared AM1038)

In August, the Hawks Nest Pack consisted of one collared wolf, AM1038. AM1038 was located traveling alone in the traditional territory of the Diamond Pack in the northern and central portions of the ASNF.

Hoodoo Pack (collared AM1290, AF1333, f1550 and f1663)

In August, the Hoodoo Pack was located within their traditional territory in the north eastern portion of the ASNF. The IFT continued to observe localized behavior consistent with pup rearing. A yearling female, f1663, in the Hoodoo pack was captured, collared and released in August.

Maverick Pack (collared AF1291)

In August, 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 August, the Panther Creek Pack was located in the east central portion of the ASNF. The breeding pair continued to display localized behavior consistent with pup rearing. A minimum of three pups were documented with the Panther Creek Pack during the month of August. The IFT maintained a food cache for this pack to reduce potential for livestock depredations and with the goal of increasing survival of genetically valuable pups that the IFT cross-fostered into the Panther Creek Pack in May.

Prime Canyon Pack (collared F1488)

In August, F1488 and an unknown collared wolf continued to travel together within a territory in the east central portion of the ASNF.

Saffel Pack (collared AF1567 and mp1661)

In August, the Saffel Pack was located in the north eastern portion of the ASNF, north of the traditional territory of the Hoodoo Pack. The IFT confirmed a minimum of four pups with the Saffel Pack in August and continued to observe behavior consistent with pup rearing. A male pup, mp1661, was captured, collared and released in August. A diversionary food cache was maintained by the IFT for this pack in effort to avoid conflict with cattle in the area.

Single collared m1483

Male 1483 made wide dispersal movements in the north eastern portion of the ASNF in Arizona during August.

Single collared f1484

Female 1484 was documented traveling alone in Arizona at the southern edge of Panther Creek's traditional territory in the east central portion of the ASNF during August.

Single collared f1562

Female 1562 remained outside of the Bluestem Pack's traditional territory in the central portion of the ASNF during August.

ON THE FAIR:

Diamond Pack (collared m1559, f1560, m1571, and m1572)

In August, the Diamond Pack was located in their traditional territory on the FAIR and in the central portion of the ASNF. F1557 was lethally removed by Wildlife Services due to repetitive confirmed depredations on livestock. The IFT maintained a diversionary food cache on the ASNF for the Diamond Pack to reduce potential for further wolf-livestock conflict.

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

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

IN NEW MEXICO:

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

During August, the Iron Creek Pack continued to utilize their territory in the northern portion of the Gila Wilderness and the southern portion of the Gila National Forest (GNF). The IFT confirmed pups with the Iron Creek Pack in May and continued to observe localized behavior consistent with pup rearing during August.

Lava Pack (collared F1405 and AM1285)

During August, the Lava Pack was located within their traditional territory in the south eastern portion of the GNF. The IFT maintained a diversionary food cache to reduce the potential for wolf-livestock conflicts.

Leopold Pack (collared AM1293, AF1346, and m1561)

During August, the IFT documented the Leopold Pack within their territory in the northern

portion of the Gila Wilderness. The IFT continued to monitor the pack for pup rearing behavior in August.

Luna Pack (collared AM1158 and AF1487)

During August, the Luna Pack remained in their traditional territory in the north central portion of the GNF. The IFT captured, collared and released female pup, fp1662, in the Luna Pack. Near the end of the month, fp1662 slipped the collar it was wearing. The animal is alive and still traveling with the pack. The IFT maintained a diversionary food cache to reduce potential for livestock depredations.

Mangas Pack (collared AM1296, AF1439 and fp1664)

During August, the Mangas Pack was located within their territory in the north western portion of the GNF. The Mangas Pack continued to display behavior consistent with pup rearing. The IFT captured, re-collared and released AF1439. The IFT also captured, collared and released a female pup, fp1664, with the Mangas Pack. The IFT continued to maintain a diversionary food cache to reduce the potential for wolf-livestock conflicts.

Copper Creek (collared F1444 and M1386)

During August, F1444 and M1386 were documented traveling together within the west central portions of the GNF.

Dark Canyon (collared F1456 and M1354)

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

Prieto Pack (collared AF1251, M1398 and f1565)

During August, the Prieto Pack was located within their traditional territory in the north central portion of the GNF. The IFT confirmed pups with the Prieto Pack in July and continued to observe localized behavior consistent with pup rearing in August. A diversionary food cache was established in May to reduce the potential for wolf-livestock conflicts and was utilized by the Prieto Pack in August.

San Mateo Pack (collared AF1399)

During August, the San Mateo Pack continued to utilize their territory in the north central portion of the GNF. The IFT maintained a supplemental food cache with the goal of increasing survival of the genetically diverse litter of pups.

Shepherders Baseball Park (SBP) Pack (collared AM1284 and F1553)

During August, the SBP Pack continued to use their traditional territory in the north central portion of the GNF. The IFT confirmed pups with the SBP Pack in May and observed the pack continued to display localized behavior consistent with pup rearing during the month of August. The IFT established a diversionary food cache in June to reduce the potential for wolf-livestock conflicts. The food cache was utilized by the SBP Pack during the month of August.

Single collared AM1155

During August, AM1155 was documented traveling within the GNF in New Mexico.

Single collared M1455

During August, M1455 traveled throughout east-central portions of the GNF and central portions of the Cibola National Forest (CNF).

Single collared M1552

During August, M1552 traveled throughout central portions of the CNF

Single collared m1569

During August, m1569 traveled throughout northern and central portions of the CNF.

Single collared m1486

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

MORTALITIES

In August, F1557 of the Diamond Pack was lethally removed by Wildlife Services due to repetitive confirmed depredations on livestock.

INCIDENTS

During the month of August, there were four confirmed wolf depredation incidents on livestock and one nuisance report.

On August 2, Wildlife Services investigated two dead calves and a dead cow in Apache County, AZ. The investigations determined one calf had been killed by wolves, the second calf was a probable wolf kill during an earlier incident and the cow had died from ingesting twine.

On August 3, Wildlife Services investigated a dead calf in Apache County, AZ. The investigation determined the calf had been killed by wolves.

On August 8, the IFT received a call from a hiker that described an encounter they had with a wolf pack on August 1, while hiking in the ASNF. GPS collar data was used by the IFT to determine the encounter reported by the hiker was with the Saffel Pack which consists of two adult wolves and their pups from this year. The hiker told the IFT they were hiking on the Apache Trail southeast of Mexican Hay Lake on August 1 at approximately 12:00pm, when they noticed a collared adult wolf standing approximately 15 feet away. The hiker stopped and looked at the wolf at which point the wolf ran to about 60 feet and then stopped. The hiker stated they observed a second collared adult wolf approximately 20 to 30 yards away and three uncollared pups approximately 50 to 60 yards away. The hiker yelled at the wolves and they did not run off. The closest wolf, which was apparent to the hiker as a male, defecated and then started jumping up and down on its front feet. The hiker fired a shot from a handgun into the ground to scare the wolves away. The closest wolf jumped at the sound of the gunshot but remained. The hiker began walking again and the closest wolf retreated to about 50 yards. The wolves then moved off into the woods to a distance of approximately 100 yards. The hiker stated that the two adult wolves paralleled the hiker and followed along the trail for a distance of

about 400 yards. The hiker stated the pups were only visible intermittently at a distance during this time. GPS collar data from the Saffel Pack showed in the days following the hiker's encounter, the Saffel Pack had moved out of the location where the encounter had occurred and by the day the IFT received the report, the Saffel Pack had begun traveling in another area to the east.

The IFT concluded the encounter the hiker had with the Saffel Pack was a result of the hiker walking into a rendezvous site where the alpha wolves exhibited behaviors to protect the pups present. At the time of the incident, the wolf pups in the Saffel Pack would have been four months old. The behavior of the adult male jumping up and down on its front feet is often observed of Mexican wolves in captive breeding facilities with young pups in response to human presence. Wolves vocalizing and following a perceived threat out of an area is a common territorial behavior exhibited by wolves. At the time this report was prepared, there have been no further nuisance reports on the Saffel Pack.

The public is encouraged to report all wolf interactions to the IFT using the contact information provided at the beginning of this document. Any person may take (which includes killing as well as nonlethal actions such as harassing or harming) a Mexican wolf in self-defense or defense of the lives of others. 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 August 9, Wildlife Services investigated a dead calf in Apache County, AZ. The investigation determined the calf had been killed by a wolf.

On August 14, Wildlife Services investigated a dead calf in Apache County, AZ. The investigation determined the calf had been killed by a wolf.

COMMUNICATION AND COORDINATION

On August 24, the USFWS attended the New Mexico State Game Commission meeting where the draft Mexican Wolf Recovery Plan was discussed.

On August 29, the USFS attended a Coronado National Forest Permittee meeting in Sonoita, AZ and provided a wolf program update.

On August 29, the USFWS met with the Western Landowners Alliance in Albuquerque, NM to discuss conservation programs.

PROJECT PERSONNEL

In August, Erika Sertyl started a volunteer position with the USFWS. Welcome to the program Erika!

In August, McKenna Zandarski concluded a summer internship on the IFT with the AGFD. Thank you McKenna for your hard work and commitment to Mexican wolf recovery efforts!

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.