

## **MEXICAN GRAY WOLF** (*Canis lupus baileyi*)

**STATUS:** Endangered (32 FR 4001, March 11, 1967; 41 FR 17736, April 28, 1976; 43 FR 1912, March 9, 1978) without critical habitat. Experimental, nonessential designation for Southwest (63 FR 1763, January 12, 1998).

**SPECIES DESCRIPTION:** A large dog-like carnivore. The coat is a mix of brown, rust, black, gray and white. Has a distinct white lip line, chin and throat. Adults weigh between 23-41 kgs (50-90 pounds).

**HABITAT:** Inhabits oak and pine/juniper savannahs in the foothills and mix conifer woodlands above 1,200 m (4,000 feet) elevation. Not a desert-dwelling animal.

**RANGE:** The Mexican wolf is the southernmost occurring and most endangered subspecies of gray wolf in North America. The Mexican wolf is the last subspecies of gray wolf known to occur in the Arizona-New Mexico area. The last known naturally occurring U.S. specimen was found dead in New Mexico in 1970.

**Historical:** Occurred in southeastern Arizona, southwestern New Mexico, southwestern Texas, and south through the Sierra Madre of Mexico.

**Present:** After being extirpated from the U.S., a reintroduction program is underway. In March 1998, the first 11 Mexican wolves from captive stock were reintroduced into the wild as an experimental nonessential population in the Apache National Forest in southeastern Arizona under a program to re-establish the subspecies to a portion of its historic range. These wolves are allowed to disperse into and colonize the entire Apache National Forest and adjacent Gila National Forest in western New Mexico, an area of about 7,000 square miles (18,130 square kilometers). This area is referred to as the "Blue Range Wolf Recovery Area." As of January 2008, the minimum population estimate of wolves in the wild is 52. The status of released Mexican wolves can change rapidly. For up-to-date information, visit the Mexican wolf web page at <http://www.fws.gov/southwest/es/mexicanwolf/>

**REASONS FOR DECLINE/VULNERABILITY:** Endangered due to Federal, state, and private predator control programs which eliminated the wolves from Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas by around 1950. Similar programs eliminated the wolf in Mexico in the 1980s. Methods included poisoning, shooting, trapping, and denning.

**NOTES:** A Recovery Plan was completed in September 1982, with a second revision in progress.

There are only about 300 Mexican wolves in the world. Most are part of a captive breeding program in 45 zoos and wildlife sanctuaries located in the United States and Mexico to prevent extinction of the subspecies.

Species listed as a Species of Special Concern by the State of Arizona.