



Mexican Wolf Recovery Program Quarterly Update

Second Quarter 2024 (April, May, June)

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 or by visiting the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service website at fws.gov/southwest/es/mexicanwolf. For information on the FAIR, call (928) 338-4385 ext. 226 or visit wmatoutdoor.org. Past updates may be viewed at these websites. Interested parties may [sign up](#) to receive this update electronically by visiting 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), New Mexico Department of Game and Fish (NMDGF), USDA Forest Service (USFS), USDA-Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Wildlife Services (WS), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), White Mountain Apache Tribe (WMAT), Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and the U.S. National Park Service (NPS).

To view semi-monthly wolf location information please visit <https://arcg.is/bLyPO>

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 WMAT 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 Quarterly Updates

On April 18, 2024, the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit denied plaintiffs' petition for rehearing and motion to vacate the district court's ruling on alleged violations of the Endangered Species Act and Administrative Procedure Act regarding the adequacy of the 2017 Mexican Wolf Recovery Plan. Plaintiffs had filed the motion for rehearing and vacatur following the Ninth Circuit's December 2023 ruling that the lawsuit was moot because it was superseded by the 2022 Recovery Plan. These rulings finalized the litigation on the 2017 Mexican Wolf Recovery Plan.

On April 24, 2024, representatives from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Forest Service, and New Mexico Department of Game and Fish attended the Hidalgo County Public Lands Advisory Committee Meeting in Lordsburg, NM. Discussion was focused on the translocation of AF1828 and AM2774.

On June 12, 2024, representatives from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Forest Service and New Mexico Department of Game and Fish attended the Catron County Commission Meeting.

On June 15, representatives from the AZGFD met with the Graham/Cochise Cattle Growers Association at their annual meeting. Jim deVos was the keynote speaker primarily covering future Mexican wolf release potential in Cochise County and compensation programs. During the question and answer portion of the schedule, the majority of the questions were focused on concerns related to the Wildlife Service's Standards of Evidence used to determine cause of death in livestock depredations.

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 breeding (dominant) wolves dies, the remaining breeding wolf, regardless of pack size, retains the pack status. The packs referenced in this update contain at least one wolf wearing a radio telemetry collar. 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 count for 2023 generated a minimum abundance of 257 Mexican wolves in the wild (113 in AZ and 144 in NM). This was a 6% increase in the population from the minimum of 242 wolves counted at the end of 2022. The increase documented from 2022 to 2023 marks the eighth consecutive year of population growth, the longest continuous streak since recovery efforts began. At the end of 2023, there were a minimum of 60 packs documented (23 in AZ and 37 in NM). Annual counts are conducted in the winter as this is when the population experiences the least amount of natural fluctuation (i.e., the population increases dramatically in the spring 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 counted wolves in winter. 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.

WOLF PACK UPDATES:

For each documented wolf pack in the table below, wolves fitted with functioning collars at the end of the quarter are listed by studbook number. Studbook numbers of wolves without collars or with non-functioning collars are not listed in the pack updates. Not all wolves in the population are collared or have assigned studbook numbers. Captures, mortalities, removals, and food caching are listed in the corresponding column for the given time period. If a pack was food cached at any time within the quarter, the food cache column will indicate the type of food cache. The primary reason for food caching will be noted with “S” for supplemental and “D” for diversionary; the reason for a food cache may change over time. If a wolf dies, becomes fate unknown, or is removed in the current time period, its studbook number will be removed from the pack column in the following quarterly report. After three months of consistent dispersal behavior away from pack territory, a dispersing wolf is no longer considered a member of its originating pack and will be added to a new row as a single wolf or member of a different pack. Packs that have raised pups in the quarter will be listed as “Yes” in the “Raising pups” column. This will remain for the calendar year if the pack was documented rearing pups in the period of April through September. Any fields that require further comment will be annotated with “*” and further comments are listed in the “Comments” column.

ARIZONA:

Wolf Pack Collared Wolves	Captures	Mortalities	Removals	Food cache	Raising pups (April – Sept)	Foster (April/May)	*Comments
Bear Canyon AM2563, AF1823, M2889	0	0	0	D	Yes	No	
Castle Rock M1921, F2632	0	0	0	0	No	No	
Eagle Creek M1477, F1548	0	0	0	0	No	No	
Elderberry* AM2722, AF2977*	1*	0	0	0	Yes	No	In April, M2722 was documented maintaining a den with an uncollared wolf. The pair was named and are now referred to as the Elderberry pack. In June, the IFT captured, collared and released AF2977.
Elk Horn AM1838, AF1866, f2865	0	0	0	0	Yes	No	
Fantasia AM2873, AF2759	0	0	0	0	Yes	No	
Firebox M1881	0	0	0	0	No	No	
Hoodoo M1893, AF2752	0	0	0	0	Yes	No	
Juniper Bench AF1920, m2859	0	0	0	D	Yes	No	
Lost Spring M2766, F2885*	0	1*	0	0	No	No	In June, F2885 was found dead in Arizona. The mortality is under investigation.
Manada del Arroyo F1828, M2774	0	0	0	0	No	No	In April F1828 was translocated back into the MWEPA in Arizona paired with M2774. The pack has remained together since the translocation.

Pancho Spring AF1889*, AM2770, m2870*	0	2*	0	0	Yes	No	In April, AF1889 was found dead in Arizona. The mortality is under investigation. Immediately following the mortality, the IFT rescued all seven of the Pancho Springs pups that were three weeks old at the time and fostered the pups into the Frieborn pack in New Mexico. In May, m2870 was found dead in Arizona. The mortality is under investigation.
Panther Creek	0	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	The Panther Creek pack was last documented in February and is now considered Fate Unknown.
Prime Canyon AM1471, F2849	0	0	0	S	Yes	Yes	In April, the IFT fostered three captive born pups into the Prime Canyon pack.
Rocky Prairie AM1383, F2769, m2863*, f2864	0	1*	0	0	Yes	No	In May, m2863 was found dead in Arizona. The wolf had previously been classified as fate unknown after not being documented for three months. The mortality is under investigation.
Rose AM1704, m2888*	0	1*	0	0	Yes	No	In May, m2888 was found dead in New Mexico. The mortality is under investigation.
Saffel AM1854, AF1939, M1852, f2976*	1*	0	0	D	Yes	No	In May, the IFT captured, collared, and released f2976.
Sierra Blanca AF1550, AM1571*, m2796	0	1*	0	0	Yes	No	In April, AM1571 was found dead in Arizona. The mortality is under investigation.
Snake Creek AM2709	0	0	0	0	Yes	No	In January, AM2709 was documented with an uncollared wolf. The pair was named and are now referred to as the Snake Creek pack.
Warm Springs AF1938, AM2545	0	0	0	0	Yes	No	
New Pack M2848	0	0	0	0	No	No	In January, M2848 dispersed from the Prime Canyon pack and was documented traveling with an uncollared wolf. In April, they were designated as a New Pack but have not yet been named.

Single f2868	0	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	
Single m2882*	0	1*	0	0	N/A	N/A	In April, an uncollared wolf, assigned studbook number m2882, was found dead in Arizona. The mortality is under investigation.
Single AF1686	0	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	

FAIR:

Wolf Pack Collared Wolves	Captures	Mortalities	Removals	Food Cache	Raising pups (April – Sept)	Foster (April/May)	*Comments
Baldy AM1347, F2767, F2887*	0	1*	0	0	No	N/A	In May, F2887 was found dead in Arizona. The mortality is under investigation.
Tsay-O-Ah AM2698, AF1283	0	0	0	0	No	N/A	
Tu dil hil AM1338, f2758	0	0	0	0	No	N/A	
Single M1857	0	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	

Total number of wolf packs in Arizona at end of the quarter: 23

NEW MEXICO:

Wolf Pack Collared Wolves	Captures	Mortalities	Removals	Food Cache	Raising pups (April – Sept)	Foster (April/May)	*Comments
Agua Frio AF1936*, AM1875	0	1*	0	0	Yes	No	In May, AF1936 was found dead in New Mexico. The mortality is under investigation.

Aldo AM2561	0	0	0	0	No	No	
Beaver Point AM1949, AF2753*, f2884	0	1*	0	D	Yes	No	In April, AF2753 was found dead in New Mexico. The mortality is under investigation.
Burnt Peaks M2557	0	0	0	0	No	No	
Buzzard Peak AF1726, AM2567, F2713	0	0	0	0	Yes	No	
Canovas Creek AM1584	0	0	0	0	No	No	
Centerfire AM2697	0	0	0	D	Yes	No	.
Chimney Canyon AM2636, AF2523	0	0	0	S	Yes	Yes	In May, the IFT fostered three captive born pups into the Chimney Canyon pack.
Cimmaron Mesa AF1705, AM2702	0	0	0	0	Yes	No	
Colibri M1856	0	0	0	0	Yes	No	
Cottonwood Canyon AF2503, AM1859	0	0	0	S	Yes	Yes	In May, the IFT fostered three captive born pups into the Cottonwood Canyon pack.
Dark Canyon AM1354, AF1456, F2741*	0	1*	0	0	Yes	No	In May, F2741 was found dead in New Mexico. The mortality is under investigation.
Dillon Mountain AF1865	0	0	0	0	Yes	No	
El Torro F2861	0	0	0	0	Yes	No	
Frieborn AF1443, AM2765	0	0	0	S	Yes	Yes	Following the mortality of AF1889 of the Pancho Spring pack in April, the IFT fostered the seven wild

							born pups from Pancho Spring into the Frieborn pack in New Mexico.
Gallinas Canyon AF2588, AM2700	0	0	0	0	Yes	No	
Hail Canyon AF2690, AM2764, m2821, m2834	0	0	0	S	Yes	Yes	In May, the IFT fostered three captive born pups into the Hail Canyon pack.
Iron Creek AF1278, M2549, F2756	0	0	0	0	Yes	No	
Leon AM1824, AF1578, f2806	0	0	0	0	Yes	No	
Leopold AF1346, AM1855, m2883	0	0	0	0	Yes	No	
Lonesome AF2694, AM2755	0	0	0	S	Yes	Yes	In May, the IFT fostered four captive born pups into the Lonesome pack.
Luna AF1487	0	0	0	D	Yes	No	
Mangas F2775*	1*	0	0	0	No	No	In June, the IFT captured, recollared, and released F2775.
Milligan Gulch AF2688, AM2687	0	0	0	S	Yes	Yes	In May, the IFT fostered five captive born pups into the Milligan Gulch pack.
Neko Canyon* F2742	0	0	0	0	Yes	No	In February, F2742, formerly designated as a Single, was documented with an uncollared wolf. The pair was named and is now referred to as the Neko Canyon pack.

Noble Mountain AF1918, AM2886	0	0	0	0	Yes	No	
Pitchfork Canyon AF1853, AM2566	0	0	0	S	Yes	Yes	In April, the IFT fostered two captive born pups into the Pitchfork Canyon pack.
Point of Rocks AM1717, AF2515	0	0	0	S	Yes	Yes	In May, the IFT fostered four captive born pups into the Point of Rocks pack.
Saddle Mountain F2540	0	0	0	0	No	No	
San Mateo* AF1399*	0	1*	0	0	No	No	In June, AF1399 was found dead in New Mexico. The mortality is under investigation. AF1399 was the last remaining member of the pack. The San Mateo pack is now defunct.
Sawtooth AM2704, AF2593	0	0	0	0	Yes	No	
Shakespeare Canyon M2762*	0	1*	0	0	No	No	In May, M2762 was found dead in New Mexico. The mortality is under investigation. M2762 was the only collared member of the pack. The Shakespeare pack is now defunct.
Sheepherders Baseball Park (SBP) AF1553, AM2703*, M2719	0	0	0	0	Yes	No	In May, AM2703 became Fate Unknown due to not being located by the IFT in three months. M2719 began traveling with AF1553 in May and is now a member of the SBP pack.
Six-Shooter Saddle* AM2867	0	0	0	0	Yes	No	In May, the IFT documented AM2867 (dispersed from the Willow Creek Pack) traveling with an uncollared wolf. The pair was named and is now referred to as the Six-Shooter Saddle pack.
Snow Lake* F2746, M2772	0	0	0	0	No	No	In April, the IFT documented M2772 (dispersed from the Willow Creek Pack) traveling with F2746 (dispersed from the Iron Creek Pack). The pair was named and are now referred to as the Snow Lake pack.

Tres Lagunas* F2763	0	0	0	0	Yes	No	In February, F2763 was documented with an uncollared wolf and they were designated as a New Pair. They have since been named and are now referred to as the Tres Lagunas pack.
Wagontongue AM1946, M2773	0	0	0	0	Yes	No	
Whiskey Creek AM1842, M2760	0	0	0	0	Yes	No	
Whitewater Canyon	0	0	0	0	No	No	The IFT has continued to documented AM1455 (failed radio collar) traveling in the historical Whitewater Canyon territory.
Willow Creek AF1890, M2772	0	0	0	0	No	No	
Single M1888	0	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	
Single M2847	0	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	
Single F2743	0	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	
Single m2978	1*	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	In June, the IFT captured, collared and translocated within NM m2978 as the wolf was associated with 3 depredations and captured in close proximity to Reserve.

Total number of wolf packs in New Mexico at end of the quarter: 38

MORTALITIES

Thirteen Mexican wolf mortalities were documented in the second quarter (7 in AZ and 6 in NM). The total number of documented mortalities from January 1 through June 30, 2024 is 15 (7 in AZ and 8 in NM) Cause of death for each mortality is under investigation by USFWS Law Enforcement. The number of documented mortalities per 100 Mexican wolves, using the annual total of documented mortalities compared with the final minimum population count for 2023 was 12 mortalities/ 100 wolves. Mortalities per 100 wolves the previous three years is as follows: 16 mortalities / 100 wolves in 2020, 13 mortalities / 100 wolves in 2021 and 5 mortalities / 100 wolves in 2022.

GENETIC MANAGEMENT

Captive pups fostered (since 2016)	Captive pups fostered in 2024	^a Fosters documented alive at the end of the quarter	^a Documented mortalities of fosters	^{a,b}Fosters surviving to breeding age	^a Fosters documented producing pups	^aDocumented litters produced by fosters
126	27	12	14	19	13	30

^aThese are only **MINIMUM** values that have been documented by the IFT. The IFT does not affix radio collars on pups at the time of the foster, as the pups are too small. Pups are collared opportunistically when fostered wolves are captured later in the year or in subsequent years. Not all fosters that survive are captured and collared.

^bAt the end of the quarter, three more fostered wolves that had been collared by the IFT reached breeding age (considered two years of age or greater).

INCIDENTS

The following are investigations of livestock depredations conducted by Wildlife Services during the quarter that were determined to be caused by wolves. Investigations of dead and injured livestock conducted by Wildlife Services during this time period that were determined to be from causes other than wolves (i.e., vehicle strike, illness, coyote predation, bear predation, or unknown cause) are not listed in this quarterly update.

DEPREDATIONS

	Confirmed Wolf (Current Quarter)		Yearly Total Confirmed Wolf Killed or Died from Injuries	Probable Wolf (Current Quarter)		Yearly Total Probable Wolf by State
	Killed or Died from Injuries	Injured		Killed or Died from Injuries	Injured	
Arizona*	4	5	10	1	0	4
New Mexico	32	11	57	8	1	20
2024 Total			67			24

Unshaded cells contain totals for the current quarter, gray cells contain totals for the year.

** There are 2 investigations in AZ from the current quarter that are still pending Wildlife Services Regional Review*

The yearly total number of confirmed wolf depredation incidents in 2023 (111) was down from the yearly total of confirmed wolf depredation incidents in 2022 (137). The number of depredations per 100 Mexican wolves, using the yearly total confirmed wolf depredations (killed or died from injuries) compared with the final minimum population count for 2023 was 43 depredations / 100 wolves. Depredations per 100 wolves for the prior three years is as follows: 86 depredations / 100 wolves in 2020, 63 depredations / 100 wolves in 2021 and 56 depredations / 100 wolves in 2022.

PUBLIC INCIDENTS

On June 30, 2024, the IFT received a report from a homeowner located near Tucson, AZ that a wolf was seen in their backyard. The reporting party (RP) stated that they saw the animal through their window and that, after the animal noticed their presence, it ran off. Based on the description provided by the RP, the IFT was able to determine that this was not a wolf.

On May 7, 2024, the IFT received a report from a homeowner located approximately 10 miles south of Magdalena near State Highway 107 that an injured wolf was approximately 30 meters from his front door and fully aware of human presence. The RP estimated the wolf at 50-60 lbs. and stated it had a multi-colored (mostly red) collar with a radio transmitter. Collar description and GPS points indicate this wolf was likely single F2743. The RP

stated the wolf was holding up one foot but could still walk/limp. The RP yelled with no response, so he shot in the air and the wolf limped away. The RP speculated that it might have been interested in his chickens and barn cats. The IFT did not respond to this incident and no additional wolf related activity was reported by the RP or others in the area.

PROACTIVE MANAGEMENT

State	Monitoring efforts (monitoring with intent to haze a wolf)	Hazing events (successful hazing of a wolf)	*Diversionary food caches maintained	Carcasses removed	Proactive equipment projects (RAG boxes, fox lights, fladry)
Arizona	56	48	4	18	0
New Mexico	2	5	11	0	0
2024 Totals	208	225	13	27	3

Unshaded cells contain totals for the current quarter, gray cells contain totals for the year.

**Includes supplemental food caches, as these also served as diversionary food caches this year.*

PROGRAM PERSONNEL

In April, Gage Hollingsworth started as the new Wolf Biologist for the White Mountain Apache Tribe's Game and Fish Department. Welcome to the IFT Gage!

During the second quarter, Scott Mill, Tessa McDonnell, and Chelsey Taylor all joined the IFT working for the USFWS. Welcome Scott, Tessa and Chelsey!

REWARDS OFFERED

The USFWS is offering a reward of up to \$50,000, 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 additional funding for a total reward amount of up to \$37,000, 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 Pinetop, Arizona, at (346) 254-0515; 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.