



Mexican Wolf Recovery Program Quarterly Update

Third Quarter 2024 (July, August, September)

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 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 August 1 and 2, 2024, representatives from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Arizona Game and Fish Department, and New Mexico Department of Game and Fish participated in the annual Mexican wolf Saving Animals from Extinction (SAFE) meeting. Comprised of approximately 60 zoological institutions across the United States and Mexico, the Mexican wolf SAFE is a binational captive breeding program housing more than 350 Mexican wolves to support recovery, education, and research.

The 2023 Annual Report was completed on August 30, and SOP 11.1 Domestic Livestock and Pet Depredation Investigations was approved by the FWS Regional Director on September 26. Both are posted on the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's website at <https://www.fws.gov/program/conserving-mexican-wolf>.

On September 4, 2024, an amendment was issued to the USFWS recovery permit under section 10(a)(1)(A) of the ESA, 16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq., and its implementing regulations. The amendment expands the action area of the recovery permit to include Colorado and Utah for management activities for Mexican wolves.

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 listed 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 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	0	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	0	1*	0	0	Yes	No	In July, AM2722 was found dead in Arizona. The mortality is under investigation.
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, fp2989*	1*	0	0	D	Yes	No	In September, the IFT captured, collared and released fp2989.
Lost Spring M2766*	1*	0	0	0	No	No	In July, the IFT captured, recollared and released M2766.
Manada del Arroyo F1828, M2774	0	0	0	0	No	No	
Pancho Spring AM2770, m2988*	1*	0	0	0	Yes	No	In August, the IFT captured, collared and released m2988.
Prime Canyon AM1471, F2849	0	0	0	S	Yes	Yes	
Rocky Prairie AM1383, F2769, f2864	0	0	0	0	Yes	No	
Rose AM1704	0	0	0	0	Yes	No	

Saffel AM1854, AF1939, M1852, f2976*, mp2990*, mp2991*	2*	1*	0	D	Yes	No	In July, f2976 was found dead in Arizona. The mortality is under investigation. In September, the IFT captured, collared and released mp2990 and mp2991.
Sierra Blanca AF1550, m2796	0	0	0	0	Yes	No	
Snake Creek AM2709	0	0	0	0	Yes	No	
Warm Springs AF1938, AM2545*	0	1*	0	0	Yes	No	In August, AM2545 was found dead in Arizona. The mortality is under investigation.
New Pack M2848	0	0	0	0	No	No	
New Pair F2979*	1*	0	0	0	No	No	In July, the IFT captured, collared and released F2979.
Single f2868	0	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	
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	0	0	0	0	No	N/A	
Tsay-O-Ah AM2698, AF1283	0	0	0	0	No	N/A	
Tu dil hil AM1338*, f2758	0	1*	0	0	No	N/A	In July, AM1338 was found dead in Arizona. The mortality is under investigation.
Single M1857	0	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	

Single F2767	0	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	
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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 AM1875	0	0	0	0	Yes	No	
Aldo AM2561	0	0	0	0	No	No	
Beaver Point AM1949*, f2884, M2557	0	0	0	0	Yes	No	In July, AM1949 became Fate Unknown after not being located for three months.
Burnt Peaks* M2557*	0	0	0	0	No	No	In July, M2557 dispersed from the Burnt Peak pack and is now a member of the Beaver Point pack. M2557 was the last remaining member of the pack. The Burnt Peak pack is now defunct.
Buzzard Peak AF1726*, AM2567	0	1*	0	0	Yes	No	In August, AF1726 was found dead in New Mexico. The mortality is under investigation.
Canovas Creek AM1584	0	0	0	0	No	No	
Centerfire AM2697	0	0	0	D	Yes	No	.
Chimney Canyon AM2636, AF2523*	0	1*	0	S	Yes	Yes	In August, AF2523 was found dead in New Mexico. The mortality is under investigation.

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 August, AF2503 became Fate Unknown after not being documented for three months.
Dark Canyon AM1354, AF1456	0	0	0	0	Yes	No	
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	
Gallinas Canyon AF2588, AM2700	0	0	0	0	Yes	No	
Hail Canyon AF2690, AM2764, m2821, m2834	0	0	0	S	Yes	Yes	
Holdup Mountain* F2743, M2847	0	0	0	0	No	No	After being documented as consistently traveling together, F2743 and M2847 were named and are now referred to as the Holdup Mountain pack.
Iron Creek AF1278*, M2549, AF2756	0	0	0	0	Yes	No	In August, AF1278 became Fate Unknown after not being located for three months.
Leon AM1824, AF1578, f2806, m2809*	1*	0	0	0	Yes	No	In August, the IFT captured, collared and released m2809.

Leopold AF1346*, AM1855, m2883	0	0	0	0	Yes	No	In September, AF1346 became Fate Unknown after not being located for over three months.
Lonesome AF2694, AM2755	0	0	0	S	Yes	Yes	
Luna AF1487	0	0	0	D	Yes	No	
Mangas F2775	0	0	0	0	No	No	
Milligan Gulch AF2688, AM2687	0	0	0	S	Yes	Yes	
Neko Canyon F2742	0	0	0	0	Yes	No	
Noble Mountain AF1918*, AM2886	0	1*	0	0	Yes	No	In August, AF1918 was found dead in New Mexico. The mortality is under investigation.
Pitchfork Canyon AF1853, AM2566	0	0	0	S	Yes	Yes	
Point of Rocks AM1717, AF2515, mp2939*	1*	0	0	S	Yes	Yes	In September, the IFT captured, collared and released mp2939.
Saddle Mountain F2540	0	0	0	0	No	No	
Sawtooth AM2704, AF2593*	0	1*	0	S	Yes	No	In August, AF2593 was found dead in New Mexico. The mortality is under investigation.

Sheepherders Baseball Park (SBP) AF1553, M2719	0	0	0	0	Yes	No	
Six-Shooter Saddle AM2867	0	0	0	0	Yes	No	
Snow Lake AF2746*, M2772	1*	0	0	0	No	No	In September, the IFT captured, recollared and released AF2746.
Tres Lagunas F2763	0	0	0	0	Yes	No	
Wagontongue AM1946, M2773	0	0	0	0	Yes	No	
Whiskey Creek AM1842, M2760	0	0	0	0	Yes	No	
Willow Creek AF1890, M2772	0	0	0	0	No	No	
Single M1888	0	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	
Single F2713	0	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	
Single m2978	0	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	

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

MORTALITIES

Eight Mexican wolf mortalities were documented in the third quarter (4 in AZ and 4 in NM). The total number of documented mortalities from January 1 through September 30, 2024 is 21 (11 in AZ and 10 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*	7	0	17	0	0	4
New Mexico	10	1	67	6	0	27
2024 Total			86			31

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

**There are two investigations in NM 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 July 26, 2024, the IFT received a report from a homeowner near Greer Lakes about two possible wolves near their property the previous evening. The RP stated that they were on their balcony when they saw what they initially thought to be two coyotes just past their property line. After further observation, the RP noted that the animals were a bit larger than a coyote and different in coloration. After the animals became aware of their presence, both animals quickly ran off. The IFT received an additional report from another RP in the area about two wolves near a water tank. The RP stated that they observed two uncollared wolves drinking at the water tank. The RP discharged their firearm into the ground, effectively hazing the animals away. Following the reports, the IFT responded by doing a site visit at both locations. Based on the description of the animals by both RP's, tracks found near

the water tank, and GPS collar locations in the general vicinity, the IFT determined that these animals where wolves from the Saffel pack. The IFT continued to monitor the area and the pack. The animals have not returned and there have been no additional reports.

On August 21, 2024, the IFT received a report from a homeowner in Greer about a possible wolf running past their private property. The RP sent a video of the animal to the IFT, who was able to confirm that it was not a wolf.

PROACTIVE MANAGEMENT

State	Monitoring efforts (monitoring with intent to haze a wolf)	Hazing events (successful hazing of a wolf)	*Diversiionary food caches maintained	Carcasses removed	Proactive equipment projects (RAG boxes, fox lights, fladry)
Arizona	66	27	2	25	0
New Mexico	30	2	11	0	0
2024 Totals	304	254	13	52	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.
*Reported number of Monitoring Efforts and Hazing Events in NM from the current quarter are still pending.

PROGRAM PERSONNEL

In July, the Arizona Game and Fish Department hired two permanent Range Riders, Richard Kauffman and Hunter Bredeson. Welcome to the IFT!

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 \$51,500, depending on the information provided. The total amount is up to \$103,500.

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.