

From: [Jason Mark](#)
To: [Humphrey, Jeff](#); [Jason Mark](#)
Cc: [Barrett, Sherry](#); [Maggie Dwire](#)
Subject: Re: Reporter's Query: Wolves and Wildness
Date: Friday, March 14, 2014 6:44:00 PM

Jeff:

Called your office this AM, but you were out of the office, so I left a message. Let me answer your questions here.

The book is tentatively titled, WILD THING: Adventures in Search of a Twenty-First Century Wilderness. Scheduled for Autumn 2015, published by Island Press.

The book is an examination of how unprecedented forces like global climate change; powerful new technologies like omnipresent cell phones and Google mapping of the backcountry; and the new idea of the Anthropocene, or the "age of man," are forcing us to think about wildness and wilderness differently.

As part of my research, I'll be traveling to the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge with the head of the Sierra Club; hanging out with Native American National Park Rangers; spending some time with the "primitivist community" (AKA modern day cave people); and diving into to the controversy over the wolf reintroduction, among other misadventures.

As I'm sure you know, the wolf has long been a kind of lightning rod species when it comes to people's ideas about wildness. This is true today as ever. So I'm spending time with wolf advocates like Dave Parsons, Jean Ossorio and Michael Robinson ... And then also interviewing Catron County ranchers like Laura Schenberger and Catron County Wildlife investigator Jess Carey ... And hopefully also talking with Maggie and/or Sherry. (And, yes, since I've been following this closely, I know all about the proposed national delisting and the proposed changes in the Southwest.)

As for my questions to US FWS staff:

Mostly they are technical ones

1) Tracking. I'd like to learn more about the mechanics of wolf tracking. How many radio collars versus GPS collars? How much info can you get off the more advanced collars? I've heard, for example, of grizzly tracking studies where they can even get heart rate off the collars. True with the wolf collars? ... How are wolves born in the wild selected to receive a collar? That is, how do you choose which animals get collars and which don't? Also: What level of tracking coverage/penetration do you think you need for solid info? How many wolves out of the total population need to be collared/tracked?

2) Translocations. How do you make the decisions on when to relocate an animal? If an animal is without a collar, how do you know if it goes beyond the recovery zone? ... What exactly is the process for the relocation? Tranquilize the animal from a helicopter, I assume ... And then what? How many days back captivity? Then how is the decision made to release? ... And also where to release?

3) Genetics. What are US FWS overall feelings on genetic diversity of the captive population? Of the

wild population? Challenges and opportunities for improving genetic diversity?

And then the big question, which you all can decide whether or not you want to address: Given this level of human management/control, can we really say that these are “wild” animals? Or do they inhabit some kind of gray space between wild and domesticated?

I really hope we can make this work. I do not bite, and I have every intention of putting the efforts of the US FWS in the best light.

... At the very least, I’m hoping that Maggie or Sherry could walk me through the technical Qs so that I don’t get any of the conservation science wrong.

Talk soon,

Jason

On 3/13/14, 2:34 PM, "Humphrey, Jeff" <jeff_humphrey@fws.gov> wrote:

Jason,

Thanks for your understanding. We are entertaining a number of writers' and producers' requests for interviews on the Mexican wolf recovery program.

I'll present your request to our leadership to determine how we can best assist you in your effort (and identify the best wolf program source for you to work with).

Please provide a list of the questions or topics that you would anticipate asking, so that we can identify the best FWS personnel for interviews and so that they can be prepared for your interview. Also, yes, it would be helpful if you could provide a bit of background/perspective on book you are writing.

You identified that you met Sherry at the wolf hearing in Albuquerque. So I presume that you are up to speed on the proposed changes in the Mexican wolf program. May I suggest that you visit the website (<http://www.fws.gov/southwest/es/mexicanwolf/>) for current information and background/familiarity with the the many aspects of the program and to focus the interview.

Many thanks!

P.S. Are you the editor of Earth Island Journal?

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On Wed, Mar 12, 2014 at 3:59 PM, Jason Mark <jmark@earthisland.org> wrote:

Sherry: Great. Thanks much.

Jeff: Please let me know if you have any questions about what I'm working on. I'm happy to talk by phone if that's easier for you. ... I'm very eager to speak with Sherry and/or Maggie in the next couple of weeks. Please let me know what you need from my end to move this forward.

Many thanks,

Jason

On Wed, Mar 12, 2014 at 7:21 AM, Barrett, Sherry
<sherry_barrett@fws.gov> wrote:

Hi Jason: I'm forwarding your email to Jeff Humphrey, who handles media requests. He will contact you.

Thanks

On Tue, Mar 11, 2014 at 5:18 PM, Jason Mark
<jmark@earthisland.org> wrote:

Sherry:

Good afternoon. My name is Jason Mark and I'm a writer working on a book about wildness and wilderness in the 21st century. You might remember we connected last year, when I had some questions for you right after the USFWS hearing in Albuquerque.

I'm wondering if you might have any time in the next week or so to talk. As part of my

reporting on wildness, I'm focusing on the fascinating story of the Mexican gray wolf reintroduction. I'd love to ask you some questions about how the whole effort is going.

When would be a good time for you next week? I'm very open.

When you have a chance, please write me here and let me know what your schedule looks like for a 30 to 40 minute conversation.

Many thanks for your attention,

Jason