



Mexican Wolf Recovery Program Quarterly Update

First Quarter, 2022 (January, February, March)

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 (USDA-APHIS 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://arcgis.com/bLyPO> --- An error message is generated upon opening this link. The RecentHexagons layer cannot be added to the map and locations aren't visible.

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 October 29, 2021, the USFWS published proposed revisions to the management regulations for Mexican wolves in the MWEPA under section 10(j) of the Endangered Species Act for a 90-day public comment period ending January 27, 2022 (86 FR 59953). The proposed rule included a revised population objective, a new genetic objective, the temporary restriction of three allowable forms of take of Mexican wolves in the MWEPA that were established in the 2015 10(j) rule. USFWS is taking this action in response to the remand of the 2015 final 10(j) rule for the MWEPA by the District Court of Arizona. The proposed revisions will ensure that the management of the wild population is consistent with the recovery strategy for the Mexican wolf provided in the Mexican Wolf Recovery Plan, First Revision (2017). USFWS has a court-ordered deadline of July 1, 2022, to produce a final revised 10(j) rule, and a fresh essentiality determination. The proposed rule, draft and final supplemental environmental impact statements, a draft Record of Decision, and public comments and peer reviews are available for viewing at <https://www.regulations.gov/docket/FWS-R2-ES-2021-0103>.

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 census for 2021 generated a minimum abundance of 196 Mexican wolves in the wild (112 in NM and 84 in AZ). This was a 5% increase in the population from the 2020 end of year census. Annual surveys 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 time period. 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)	Cross foster (April/May)	*Comments
Bear Canyon AM2563, AF1823	0	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	
Castle Rock M1921, AF1686, f2699	1*	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	f2699 was captured, collared, and released by the IFT in March during helicopter capture operations. M1921, a former Prime Canyon pack member, joined the Castle Rock pack in February.
Eagle Creek M1477, F1548	0	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	
Elk Horn AF1294, AM1838, f1866	2*	0	0	D*	N/A	N/A	AF1294 was captured, recollared, and released by the IFT in January during helicopter count/capture operations. A diversionary food cache was set up in February to mitigate wolf/livestock conflict. In March, f1866, a genetically diverse cross-foster from 2020, was captured, collared and released by the IFT during helicopter capture operations.
Hoodoo AF1333, M1789, F1938, f1890, f1889, mp2602, fp2603, m1893, mp2597	2*	1*	0	0	N/A	N/A	m1893 and mp2597 were captured, collared, and released by the IFT during helicopter capture operations in March. mp2597 is a genetically diverse Mexican wolf that was cross-fostered into the Hoodoo pack in 2021. AM1290 was found dead in March. The event is under investigation.

Wolf Pack Collared Wolves	Captures	Mortalities	Removals	Food cache	Raising pups (April – Sept)	Cross foster (April/May)	*Comments
Noble Mountain AM1571, AF1918	1*	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	AM1571 was captured, recollared, and released by the IFT in January during helicopter count/capture operations.
Panther Creek AF1683	0	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	
Prime Canyon F1920, M2701	1*	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	M1921 started dispersal movements in December 2021 and joined the Castle Rock pack in February 2022. M2701 was captured and collared in March during helicopter capture operations.
Rocky Prairie AM1383, AF1489, F2534, f2536	1*	0	1*	0	N/A	N/A	In March, F2534 was captured on the FAIR due to nuisance behavior and removed to captivity.
Rose M1704	0	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	
Saffel M1852, M1854, AF1939, fp2694	0	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	
Sierra Blanca AF1550	0	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	
Slade fp2691	0	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	
Single m2627	1*	0	1*	D	N/A	N/A	In March, m2627, a yearling dispersed from the Castle Rock Pack, was captured by the IFT and removed to captivity due to multiple and sustained depredation incidents on livestock.
Single m2520	0	1*	0	0	N/A	N/A	Single m2520 was documented dead in early January. The incident is under investigation.

FAIR:

Wolf Pack Collared Wolves	Captures	Mortalities	Removals	Food Cache	Raising pups (April – Sept)	Cross foster (April/May)	*Comments
Baldy AM1347	0	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	
Tsay-O-Ah AM2698, AF1283	0	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	AM2698 was captured, collared and released during helicopter capture operations in March.

Wolf Pack Collared Wolves	Captures	Mortalities	Removals	Food Cache	Raising pups (April – Sept)	Cross foster (April/May)	*Comments
Tu dil hil AM1338, AF1679	1*	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	AM1338 recollared helo March

NEW MEXICO:

Wolf Pack Collared Wolves	Captures	Mortalities	Removals	Food Cache	Raising pups (April – Sept)	Cross foster (April/May)	*Comments
Agua Frio AF1936, AM1875	0	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	
Aldo M2561, AF1712	0	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	
Beaver Point AF1837, AM1949	1*	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	AM1949 was captured, collared, and released by the IFT during the annual helicopter count and capture.
Blue Canyon M1953	0	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	
Buzzard Peak M1831, F1726	0	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	
Canovas Creek AF2569, AM1584	1*	0	0	D	N/A	N/A	AM1584 was captured, collared, and released by the IFT as part of the March helicopter capture operation.
Centerfire F1916	0	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	
Cimmaron Mesa AF1705, AM2702	1*	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	AM2702 was captured, collared, and released by the IFT as part of the March helicopter capture operation.
Colibri AM1555, M1856	1*	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	M1856 was captured, recollared, and released by the IFT as part of January helicopter count/capture operation.
Cottonwood Canyon f2503, M1859	0	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	M1859 joined the Cottonwood Canyon pack in January.
Dark Canyon AM1354, AF1456, M1855	0	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	
Frieborn AF1443, AM2700	1*	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	AM2700 was captured, collared, and released by the IFT as part of the March helicopter count/capture operation.
Hail Canyon AF2690	0	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	
Iron Creek	0	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	

Wolf Pack Collared Wolves	Captures	Mortalities	Removals	Food Cache	Raising pups (April – Sept)	Cross foster (April/May)	*Comments
AM1240, AF1278, m2545, m2549							
Lava AM1285, AF1405, mp2594	1*	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	mp2594, a genetically diverse cross-foster from 2021, was captured, collared, and released by the IFT during the annual helicopter count and capture.
Leon AM1824, AF1578	0	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	
Luna AM1158, AF1487, m2567	0	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	
Mangas AM1296, AF1439, mp2687	0	0	0	D	N/A	N/A	
Owl Canyon AM1790, AF1701, fp2588, fp2589, mp2590, fp2593	2*	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	fp2588 was trapped by a private trapper on private land in NM. The wolf was recollared and released back on public land in NM by the IFT. mp2590 was caught by the IFT in AZ in an area of recent depredation events and translocated in NM within the MWEPA.
Pitchfork Canyon F1853, M2566	0	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	
Point of Rocks AM1717, fp2688, mp2689	0	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	
San Mateo AF1399, mp2636	1*	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	mp2636 was captured, re-collared, and released by the IFT during March helicopter operations.
Seco Creek AM1693, AF1728	0	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	
Shepherders Baseball Park (SBP) AF1553, AM2703	1*	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	AM2703 was captured, collared, and released by the IFT during the March helicopter operations. M2557 has been documented traveling away from the SBP pack for 3 months and is now considered a Single animal.
Squirrel Springs AF1788	1*	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	AF1788 was caught in a private trap. The IFT briefly took this animal into veterinary care. The animal was later recollared and released in NM.
Wagontongue M1946	0	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	
Whiskey Creek M1842	0	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	

Wolf Pack Collared Wolves	Captures	Mortalities	Removals	Food Cache	Raising pups (April – Sept)	Cross foster (April/May)	*Comments
Whitewater Canyon AF1684	0	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	
Single F1692	0	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	
Single M1859	0	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	
Single M1857	1*	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	M1857 was captured, recollared, and released during January helicopter operations.
Single m1888							m1888, a genetically diverse cross-foster into the Hoodoo Pack in 2020, became a single wolf in January following 3 months of consistent dispersal behavior.
Single M2557	0	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	

GENETIC MANAGEMENT

Captive pups cross-fostered (since 2016)	Captive pups cross-fostered in 2021	^{a,b} Cross-fosters documented alive at the end of the quarter	^a Documented mortalities of cross-fosters	^{a,b} Cross-fosters surviving to breeding age	^{a,b} Cross-fosters documented producing pups
72	22	14	7	7 (as of 3/31/22)	4

^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 cross-foster, as the pups are still too small. Pups are collared opportunistically when cross-fostered wolves are captured later in the year or in subsequent years. Not all cross-fosters that survive are captured and collared.

^bIn 2014, F1126 was released from captivity pregnant with a mate and they split up immediately. F1126 and its pups were brought back into captivity, except for two pups (AF1346 and AM1347) which were fostered into the Dark Canyon Pack and are have both been successful breeders in their own packs. These two wolves represent a successful cross-fostering event and are contributing valuable genetics to the wild population, but are not included in these totals since this event occurred prior to December 2015 and they do not count toward recovery criteria.

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	15	0	15	0	0	0
New Mexico	37	2	37	1	0	1
2022 Total			52			1

White cells contain totals for the given time period, grey cells contain totals for the year.

PUBLIC INCIDENTS

On January 9, 2022, the IFT received a report of a collared wolf observed walking down a driveway approximately 300 yards from a residence in Nutrioso, AZ. The IFT responded and was unable to locate any wolves in the area. GPS collar data later indicated the Noble Mountain Pack had been in the area.

On February 13, 2022, the IFT took a delayed report of four wolves that were observed travelling past a residence in Alpine, AZ. Due to the delayed nature of the report no sight visit was conducted. The IFT used GPS collar locational data to assign the nuisance incident to the Owl Canyon Pack.

On February 24, 2022, the IFT received reports of two different sightings of a collared wolf observed at the Pinetop Country Club area near residences in Pinetop, AZ. One report provided information that the collared wolf was traveling with two dogs. This was later verified by the IFT. GPS collar data and a photograph taken by one of the residents indicated the collared wolf was f2534, a sub-adult disperser from the Rocky Prairie Pack. On February 26, the IFT took another report from a resident in the Pinetop Country club whom had found wolf tracks outside their residence on February 24 and 25. Based on GPS collar data and observations, this nuisance incident was also assigned to f2534. The IFT responded and determined f2534 had moved back onto the Fort Apache Indian Reservation.

On March 8, the IFT took a report of two wolves observed feeding on a dead elk near a residence in Alpine, AZ. The IFT responded to the location, removed the elk carcass to eliminate the potential of attracting wolves back to the residential area, and obtained a VHF signal on f1920 south of the location on the National Forest. The IFT continued monitoring and hazing efforts in this area for the duration of the quarter.

On March 14, the IFT received a report of four collared wolves observed near an elk carcass located near residences in Nutrioso, AZ. The reporting party stated the wolves would leave at the presence of people or vehicles, but would return later to the carcass. The IFT responded and documented VHF collar signals from wolves in both the Sierra Blanca and Hoodoo Packs. The IFT hazed the wolves with less than lethal munitions and removed the elk carcass to eliminate the attractant of wolves returning to the area. No additional nuisance incidents were reported in Nutrioso for the duration of the quarter.

PROACTIVE MANAGEMENT

State	Hazing efforts (separate attempts to haze wolves)	Hazing events (successful hazing of a wolf)	Diversionsary food caches*	Carcasses removed	Proactive Equipment Deployed (RAG boxes, fox lights, fladry)
Arizona	82	48	2	10	2
New Mexico	120	39	2	9	0
2022 Totals	202	87	4	19	2

White cells contain totals for the given time period, grey cells contain totals for the year.

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

PROGRAM PERSONNEL

There are no personnel updates for this quarter.

REWARDS OFFERED

The USFWS is offering a reward of up to \$10,000, 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 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; 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.