



Mexican Wolf Recovery Program Quarterly Update

First Quarter, 2021 (January, February and 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://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

In an effort to provide more concise information and to make this report more useful, beginning in October 2020, the report format was changed to provide information on a quarterly basis. This is the first quarter report for 2021.

The USFWS continued to work with Cooperating Agencies on the court-ordered remand of the 2015 10(j) rule and development of a supplemental environmental impact statement.

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 alpha (dominant) wolves dies, the remaining alpha 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 2020 was a minimum of 186 Mexican wolves in the wild (72 in AZ and 114 in NM). This was a 14% increase in the population from the 2019 end of year census. At the end of 2019, a minimum of 163 wolves were documented, which was a 24% increase from 2018. This population has nearly doubled in size over the last five years. Annual surveys are conducted in the winter as this is when the population experiences the least amount of natural fluctuation (i.e. in the spring the population increases dramatically 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 wolves in the 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. 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 raising pups will be listed as “Yes” in the “Raising pups” column. 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 F1823, m2563	0	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	
Castle Rock AF1686	0	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	
Cerro Trigo AM2555, F1919	0	1*	0	0	N/A	N/A	mp2560 was found dead in AZ in February; the incident is under investigation. F1919 was documented travelling with AM2555 in January and has joined the pack.
Eagle Creek M1477	0	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	
Elk Horn AF1294, fp1868, M1838	1*	2*	0	0	N/A	N/A	AM1342 died in January after being captured by the IFT to replace a nonfunctioning GPS collar during the annual count and capture helicopter operations. fp1869 was found dead in AZ during March; the incident is under investigation. M1838, of the Gatlin Canyon Pack, was documented traveling with AF1294 starting in early February. fp1868 was captured and collared during the annual count and capture helicopter operations.
Hoodoo AM1290, AF1333, F1830, m1789, f1938, fp1890, mp1888	0	1*	0	0	N/A	N/A	fp1887, a cross-foster from 2020, was found dead in AZ, the incident is under investigation.
Noble Mountain AM1571, F1918	0	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	F1918 was documented with the Noble Mountain pack in January and has continued to stay with the pack.
Panther Creek AM1382, AF1683	0	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	
Prime Canyon f1791, f1920, m1921	1*	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	AF1488 was captured and recollared during the annual count and capture helicopter operations. AF1488's collar was subsequently found in March; the incident is under investigation.
Rocky Prairie AM1383, AF1489, fp2534, fp2564	0	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	
Rose M1704, F1828	0	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	

Saffel M1852, M1854, F1939	0	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	F1939 has been documented traveling with M1852 and M1854 since January and is now considered part of the Saffel Pack.
Sierra Blanca AF1550	0	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	
New Pack F1916	0	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	F1916 was documented traveling with an uncollared wolf in February and was considered a new pair in March.
Single M1832	1*	0	1*	0	N/A	N/A	M1832 dispersed from Mangas pack into Arizona early this quarter. In March, M1832 was captured and temporarily removed to captivity to provide veterinary care for an injury.
Single mp1898	0	1*	0	0	N/A	N/A	In January, mp1898 dispersed from Mexico into NM then into AZ. In February, the wolf was found dead in AZ from a vehicle strike.

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	F1560's collar has failed.
Poker F1841	0	0	1*	0	N/A	N/A	AM1582 was removed from San Carlos Apache Tribe during helicopter count and capture operations at the request of the Tribe.
Tsay-O-Ah M1559, AF1283	0	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	
Tu dil hil AM1338, AF1679	0	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	

NEW MEXICO:

Wolf Pack Collared Wolves	Captures	Mortalities	Removals	Food Cache	Raising pups (April – Sept)	Cross foster (April/May)	*Comments
Aldo m2561, F1712	0	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	F1712 (previously Iron Creek) and m2561 (previously Dark Canyon) were documented traveling together and have been renamed the Aldo pack
Agua Frio F1936, M1875	0	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	

Buzzard Peak M1831, F1726	1*	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	M1831 (previously a single animal) and F1726 (previously uncollared) were documented traveling together and have been renamed the Buzzard Peak Pack. F1726 was captured and collared during annual count and capture helicopter operations.
Cimmaron Mesa AF1705, M1950	0	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	AF1705 and (previously San Mateo) M1950 were documented traveling together.
Beaver Point F1837	0	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	
Blue Canyon F1834, M1844	0	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	
Colibri AM1555, AF2565, M1856	1*	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	AF2565 was captured, collared and released during annual count and capture helicopter operations.
Dark Canyon AM1354, AF1456, m1855, mp2505, mp2520	1*	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	AM1354 was captured and recollared during annual count and capture helicopter operations.
Frieborn AF1443	0	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	
Iron Creek AM1240, AF1278, F1721, M1710, mp2545, mp2549	0	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	
Lava AM1285, AF1405	0	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	
Leon AM1824, AF1578	1	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	
Leopold AF1346	0	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	
Luna AM1158, AF1487, mp2567	2*	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	AF1487 was captured and recollared (failed collar) during annual count and capture helicopter operations. mp2567 was collared after being inadvertently trapped by a private trapper.
Mangas AM1296, AF1439, M1859	0	0	0	D	N/A	N/A	M1832 and M1842 dispersed and became single wolves during this quarter.
Monument Saddle M1953	0	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	M1953 was documented with an uncollared female and became a new pack during this quarter.
Negrito M1693, F1728	2*	0	2*	D	N/A	N/A	F1728 (previously uncollared) was fitted with a radio collar. A diversionary food cache was established and extensive hazing effort was put forth towards this pack during this quarter. Both members of this pack

							were captured by helicopter and removed from the wild.
New Pack F2569	1*	0	1*	0	N/A	N/A	A previously uncollared wolf, F2569 was captured, temporarily removed for veterinary care and released back into the wild during this quarter. F2569 was pregnant and believed to be with an uncollared male.
Owl Canyon AM1790, AF1701	0	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	
Pitchfork Canyon F1853, M2566, mp2559	1*	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	M2566 was captured and collared during annual count and capture helicopter operations.
Point of Rocks M1717	0	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	
San Mateo AF1399, fp2503	0	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	
Sheepherders Baseball Park (SBP) AF1553, m2557, fp2558	0	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	
Squirrel Springs AF1788, M1857*	0	1*	1*	0	N/A	N/A	An uncollared wolf was found dead in Squirrel Springs territory; the incident is currently under investigation. M1857 was captured by helicopter due to a foothold trap on a front foot, provided veterinary care in captivity and returned to the wild.
Wagontongue M1946 and F1951	1*	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	M1946 dispersed and formed a new pack with an uncollared wolf in January. F1951 (previously uncollared) was captured, collared and released during annual count and capture operations.
Whiskey Creek mp2556	0	1*	0	0	N/A	N/A	AM1681 was found dead in NM in February; the incident is currently under investigation.
Whitewater Canyon F1684	0	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	
Single M1842	0	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	
Single m2542	0	1*	0	0	N/A	N/A	An uncollared male (assigned studbook m2542) was found dead in the San Mateo Mountains in NM; the incident is currently under investigation.

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 the 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	5	0	5	1	0	1
New Mexico	27	1	27	1	0	1
2021 Total			32			2

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

PUBLIC INCIDENTS

On January 31, the IFT received a report of wolves interacting with dogs near a residence in Reserve, NM. The IFT investigated and did not find evidence to determine if wolves were involved. GPS collar data showed there were no collared wolves in the area at the time of the incident.

On February 12, the IFT took a report of a wolf that approached a human on the Gila National Forest in NM. The reporting party stated they were gathering heifers on a mule when a collared wolf approached to within ten feet and an uncollared wolf was observed in the distance. The RP discharged a firearm which caused the wolves to run off. The IFT investigated the incident and determined that due to the location of the incident (on a bench), that both parties (human/mule and wolves) were surprised/startled and both reacted as expected given the circumstances. The IFT determined the incident occurred in proximity to a recently killed heifer.

On February 15, the IFT took a report of a collared wolf that was observed approximately 20 yards from a residence adjacent to the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest in Nutrioso, AZ. The reporting party observed the wolf from inside the house and was able to haze the wolf away from the residence. The IFT determined the animal observed was fp1868 from the Elk Horn Pack based information provided by the reporting party.

On February 18, the IFT took a report of five wolves observed traveling along the boundary of the national forest approximately 100 yards from a residence in Nutrioso, AZ. GPS collar locations indicated the Elk Horn Pack was in the area of the observation on February 18. The reporting party

later reported hearing wolves howling near their residence on the night of February 19. Due to repeated incidents of the Elk Horn Pack near residences, the IFT initiated hazing efforts for several days in the area. No wolves were located to haze during the effort.

On February 18, the IFT took a report of two wolves observed approximately 200 yards from a residence near Luna, NM and moving into a pasture occupied by horses. The IFT responded immediately, searched the area for several hours and found tracks but no wolves in the area. The IFT determined that the incident involved uncollared wolves.

On March 7, the IFT received a report of a hiker that was approached by a wolf while walking their dog on national forest south of Alpine, AZ. The reporting party stated they observed an uncollared wolf chase their dog that had been off leash. The reporting party retrieved the dog and observed the wolf standing approximately 30 yards away. The wolf reportedly remained for about a minute until the hiker yelled at the wolf, which caused the animal to leave. The IFT responded to the location, meet with the reporting party and documented faint signals on two members of the Prime Canyon Pack. The IFT advised the hiker that interactions with dogs and wolves are not uncommon and keeping dogs on leashes is recommended when hiking in the national forest.

On March 17, the IFT took a report of an uncollared wolf leaving an elk carcass in Alpine, AZ. The IFT responded and located an elk carcass approximately 300 yards from the nearest residence, but did not locate any wolves in the area. The IFT removed the elk carcass to eliminate any attractant of wolves returning to the area. Monitoring efforts were increased.

On March 19, the IFT took a report of two wolves chasing a herd of elk near a residence in Nutrioso, AZ. The reporting party stated they discharged a firearm which caused the wolves to run off.

PROACTIVE MANAGEMENT

State	Hazing efforts (separate attempts to haze wolves)	Hazing events (successful hazing of a wolf)	Diversionary food caches*	Carcasses removed	Proactive Equipment Issued (RAG boxes, fox lights, fladry)
Arizona	13	10	0	1	0
New Mexico	118	36	3	7	1

All cells contain totals for the given time period.

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

PROGRAM PERSONNEL

In February, Genevieve Fuller left her position as AZGFD Mexican Wolf Biologist on the IFT to continue her professional career. Genevieve was an integral team member on the IFT and contributed much to Mexican wolf recovery. Thank you Genevieve for your dedication, professionalism, and

efforts to further Mexican wolf conservation.

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.