



News Release

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Fish & Wildlife Service Releases 2 Mexican Wolves Into The Wild

- The first since 2008 -

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) – along with its partners in the Arizona Game and Fish Department, New Mexico Department of Game and Fish, White Mountain Apache Tribe, USDA Forest Service and USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service - Wildlife Services, and with cooperation from Apache and Greenlee counties and other local stakeholders – released an adult male Mexican wolf (M1049) and translocated an adult female (F1105), into the Blue Range Wolf Recovery Area (BRWRA) last week.

“This first wolf release of 2011 is just one of the actions we are undertaking to increase the number of Mexican wolves on the ground,” said Benjamin Tuggle, Southwest Regional Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. “The Service is committed to having a genetically-viable, self-sustaining population of Mexican wolves living in their former range. Our partners share that commitment, and – thanks to their support and the hard work of our Interagency Field Team – we’re moving toward making that vision a reality.”

Mexican wolf M1049 was born in the wild in 2007 to the Saddle Pack. When M1049 was about 3-4 weeks old, he, along with his litter mates, were brought to Sevilleta Wolf Management Facility, and ultimately transferred to the Wild Canid Survival and Research Center in Eureka, MO.

The Interagency Field Team (IFT) – comprised of Service, Arizona Game and Fish Department, New Mexico Department of Game and Fish, White Mountain Apache Tribe, USDA Forest Service and USDA Wildlife Services employees – arranged to have M1049 brought from the Endangered Wolf Center to the BRWRA for eventual release. He was transported on a flight donated by LightHawk to the airport at Springerville, Arizona. LightHawk is a nonprofit, volunteer pilot-based organization that flies environmental missions in collaboration with a large network of pilots and hundreds of partner organizations throughout Central and North America. After undergoing a physical exam and being fitted with a radio telemetry collar M1049 was transported by truck to a holding facility in the recovery area. From there he was taken by truck, then snow-cat to the release site and set free in the Hawk’s Nest Pack territory.

Members of the IFT also brought AF1105 to the BRWRA from a holding facility in New Mexico, for translocation. Wild born in 2007, she, along with the other

members of her pack, were brought into the captive breeding program when she was about 7 months old. IFT members picked her up from the Ladder Ranch Wolf Management Facility, New Mexico, where she had been residing and drove her to the IFT Alpine office for release the next day into the Fox Mountain Pack territory of the BRWRA.

The release and translocation of these two wolves into separate areas of the BRWRA went off without a hitch. They ran off into the snow to begin the next chapter of their lives, hopefully producing many pups over the years.

“We evaluated the genetic compatibility of these two wolves and found that they are a good match for the wolves in the release areas. This release and translocation will provide a valuable contribution to the wild Mexican wolf population,” said Tuggle.

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. We are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals and commitment to public service. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit www.fws.gov.

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