



# News Release

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**Southwest Region (Arizona • New Mexico • Oklahoma • Texas)** [www.fws.gov/southwest/](http://www.fws.gov/southwest/)

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## Service Announces the Mexican Wolf Conservation Assessment Now Available

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) announced in the Federal Register today the availability of the Mexican Wolf Conservation Assessment (assessment). The assessment provides scientific information relevant to the conservation of the Mexican wolf (*Canis lupus baileyi*) in Arizona and New Mexico as a component of the Service's gray wolf (*Canis lupus*) recovery efforts. Not required by the Endangered Species Act (Act), the assessment is a non-regulatory document that does not require action by any party.

"The conservation assessment is an important step that the Service is taking to recover the Mexican wolf", said Benjamin N. Tuggle, PhD, director of the Service's Southwest Region.

"This document will form the foundation for the revised recovery plan that we are initiating this year. The revised recovery plan will lay out our recovery goals, and the actions we will take to achieve them. This conservation assessment gives us an up-to-date description and evaluation of the Mexican wolf recovery effort."

According to Tuggle the conservation assessment is one more building block, like the Mexican Wolf Interdiction Program, that will lead to the successful recovery of the Mexican wolf in the southwest.

The Service recently established a non-regulatory Mexican Wolf Interdiction Program to address wolf-livestock issues. Administered through the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, the goal of the program is to prevent or mitigate wolf depredation and nuisance impacts on local stakeholders through voluntary interdiction, incentive, and compensation programs. Guidelines for the program will be established based on a consensus of participating ranchers, sportspeople, environmental interest group representatives, and local community members, with oversight by the Service. In addition to providing funds for livestock losses due to wolf depredations, the Interdiction Program will support proactive on-the-ground practices that reduce the potential for depredations, thus simultaneously supporting landscape conservation and improved land use practices in the Southwest.

The conservation assessment provides a history of the Mexican wolf recovery effort, including the captive breeding program. The document also provides background information needed for future recovery planning and policy decisions, and may highlight issues that warrant attention and resolution. The scope of the document is primarily limited to biological science and related disciplines in order to provide an up-to-date assessment of and scientific basis for gray wolf recovery in the Southwest.

“I am determined to make this recovery effort successful”, said Tuggle. “

The Mexican wolf historically inhabited the southwestern United States and portions of Mexico until it was virtually eliminated in the wild by private and governmental predator eradication efforts in the late 1800s and early to mid-1900s. Listed as an endangered subspecies of gray wolf in 1976, conservation and recovery efforts to ensure the survival of the Mexican wolf were initially guided by the 1982 Mexican Wolf Recovery Plan, which recommended the establishment of a captive breeding program and the reintroduction of Mexican wolves to the wild. Both of these recommendations have been implemented. Today an international captive breeding program houses more than 300 wolves in addition to a wild population of 42 inhabits Arizona and New Mexico.

A recovery team was convened by the Southwest Region in 2003 to revise the 1982 plan, but the Service put the effort on hold in 2005 as it determined how to respond to several court cases related to gray wolf reclassification and delisting in the US. The Service has resolved these issues and the Southwest Region has initiated steps to develop a full revision to the 1982 recovery plan. A recovery team will be organized and convened to develop the plan. At this time there is no schedule for release of a draft for peer and public review and comment. While the Service has moved forward with delisting gray wolves in the Northern Rockies, there are no current plans to delist the Mexican wolf.

An electronic copy of the conservation assessment may be obtained from our website at <http://www.fws.gov/southwest/es/Library/>. You may also obtain a paper copy by contacting Maggie Dwire by U.S. mail at U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, New Mexico Ecological Services Field Office, 2105 Osuna NE, Albuquerque, NM 87113; by telephone at 505-761-4783, by facsimile at 505-346-2542, by e-mail at [Maggie\\_Dwire@fws.gov](mailto:Maggie_Dwire@fws.gov).

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