



News Release

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Mexican Wolf Captured in Chiricahua Area of Arizona

PHOENIX – A female Mexican wolf originating from an ongoing reintroduction effort in Mexico was captured March 26 on private ranch land in southeastern Arizona by the Interagency Field Team (IFT) and relocated to the Sevilleta Wolf Management Facility in New Mexico, where it is in good health. Management agencies in the United States and Mexico will determine the most appropriate long-term management action for this wolf.

The wolf was first sighted in the United States on March 19 by an Arizona Game and Fish Department wildlife manager and again on March 22 by ranch employees. In the latter instance, the wolf exhibited minor problem behavior by not retreating after the reporting party tried to haze it out of the area. The wolf is believed to have been traveling alone, as there have been no other wolf sightings in the area.

The wolf was initially described as wearing a GPS radio collar, and the Arizona Game and Fish Department conducted an aerial telemetry flight on March 22 to detect any signal emanating from the collar; however, no signal was detected, and the collar was later found to be non-functional.

The wolf (f1530) was born in 2016 at a captive wolf breeding facility in Cananea, Mexico, and released in October 2016 in the state of Chihuahua, Mexico, approximately 90 miles from the international border. The last collar radio transmission was Feb. 14, 2017, from 21 miles south of the international border with New Mexico.

Some area ranchers reported possible livestock depredations in the area. USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service – Wildlife Services investigated eight livestock carcasses between March 22 and 27, to determine the cause of deaths. The results of the investigation confirmed that one was killed by a wolf, four died of natural causes, two died of unknown causes, and one was unable to be investigated because of its deteriorated condition.

Ranchers who experience confirmed wolf depredations can apply for compensation through the Arizona Livestock Loss Board. Additionally, area ranchers can receive funding to implement actions to minimize wolf-livestock interaction through Defenders of Wildlife and the Mexican Wolf Fund.

“We were decisive in our management actions because this wolf was young, alone, genetically important, and not affiliated with another pack,” said U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Southwest Regional Director

Benjamin Tuggle. “Future management actions may differ based on the circumstances of each scenario.”

The area where this wolf was captured is within the federal Mexican Wolf Experimental Population Area (MWEPA) in the United States. This designation was revised in 2015 and provides flexibility for managing Mexican wolves as part of an experimental population. Prior to 2015, the MWEPA extended from Interstate 40 south to Interstate 10 in Arizona and New Mexico. The 2015 revision extended the southern boundary to the United States/Mexico border to provide more management flexibility in this area.

The Fish and Wildlife Service, along with the Arizona Game and Fish Department, the Mexican government, and the states of New Mexico, Colorado and Utah, are reviewing biological information for the development of a revised Mexican wolf recovery plan. That review focuses on recovery south of Interstate 40 and into Mexico with the expectation that populations in the two countries will be connected.

Mexico has been a partner in the recovery of the Mexican wolf since the two countries established a binational captive breeding program in the 1970s to halt the extinction of the Mexican wolf. The Mexican government began re-establishing Mexican wolves back into the wild in 2011, following their elimination from the wild in Mexico in the 1980s.

The Mexican wolf recovery program is a partnership between the Fish and Wildlife Service, Arizona Game and Fish Department, White Mountain Apache Tribe, USDA Forest Service, USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service – Wildlife Services, and several participating counties. The Interagency Field Team (IFT) is responsible for the day-to-day management of the Mexican wolf population and includes field personnel from several of the partner agencies.

For more information on the Mexican Wolf Reintroduction Program, visit <http://www.fws.gov/southwest/es/mexicanwolf/> or www.azgfd.gov/wolf