



Mexican Wolf Recovery Program Monthly Update

February 1- 29, 2020

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 <http://arcg.is/0iGSGH>.

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 Monthly Updates

In February, the IFT completed the 2019 end-of-year population count of Mexican wolves in Arizona and New Mexico. A minimum of 163 wolves (76 in AZ, 87 in NM) were documented by the IFT. The findings show a 24% increase in the population from the last count at the end of 2018. For more information on the 2019 end-of-year count and capture operations please visit <https://www.azgfd.com/mexican-wolf-population-rises-to-at-least-163-animals/> or https://www.fws.gov/news/ShowNews.cfm?ref=mexican-wolf-population-rises-to-at-least-163-animals-&_ID=36531&Source=iframe

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 with a radio telemetry collar attached to it. 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 2019 was a minimum of 163 Mexican wolves in the wild (76 in AZ and 87 in NM). This was a 24% increase in the population from a minimum of 131 wolves counted at the end of 2018. 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 at a fairly static or consistent time of year. 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.

At the end of February, there were 35 named wolf packs (18 in AZ and 17 in NM) and 9 single collared wolves. There were 101 wolves with functioning radio collars that the IFT was actively monitoring. Not all of the wolves in the population are collared. Studbook numbers following individual pack names below denote wolves with functioning radio collars.

IN ARIZONA:

Bear Canyon (collared mp1911 and f1823)

In February, mp1911 continued to be documented travelling with f1823 in the east central portion of the ASNF in Arizona and New Mexico. The animals have been documented traveling together long enough to be named the Bear Canyon Pack.

Cerro Trigo Pack (collared f1825)

In February, f1825 was documented travelling with an uncollared animal. They have been documented travelling together long enough to be named the Cerro Trigo Pack. They were located in the northeastern portion of the ASNF in Arizona.

Eagle Creek Pack (collared M1477)

In February, the IFT documented M1477 in the pack’s territory in the east central portion of the

Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest (ASNF).

Elk Horn Pack (collared AF1294, and m1698)

In February, the Elk Horn Pack was located within their traditional territory in the northeastern portion of the ASNF in Arizona and New Mexico.

Hoodoo Pack (collared AM1290, AF1333, F1830, m1789, fp1938, and fp1936)

In February, the Hoodoo Pack was located within their traditional territory in the northeastern portion of the ASNF.

Owl Canyon Pack (collared m1790 and f1701)

In February, m1790 and f1701 continued to be documented travelling together in the east central portion of the ASNF. The animals have traveled together long enough to be named the Owl Canyon Pack.

Panther Creek Pack (AM1382, AF1683, and fp1939)

In February, the IFT documented the Panther Creek Pack in their territory in the east central portion of the ASNF. fp1939 was documented starting to display dispersal movements around the pack's territory.

Prime Canyon Pack (collared AM1471, AF1488, f1791, fp1916, fp1918, fp1919, fp1920, and mp1921)

In February, the IFT documented the Prime Canyon Pack within their territory in the east central portion of the ASNF.

Rocky Prairie Pack (collared AM1383 and AF1489)

In February, the IFT documented the Rocky Prairie Pack in the east central portion of the ASNF.

Rose Pack (collared F1959 and m1704)

In February, the IFT documented F1959 and m1704 continuing to travel together. They have been together long enough to be named the Rose Springs Pack. They have been travelling in the east central portion of the ASNF.

Saffel Pack (collared AM1441, AF1567, fp1844, fp1851, mp1852, and mp1854)

In February, the Saffel Pack was located within their territory in the northeastern portion of the ASNF. AM1441 has been making broad movements separate from the pack in ASNF in Arizona.

Sierra Blanca Pack (collared AM1571 and AF1550)

In February, the Sierra Blanca Pack was located in their territory in the northeastern portion of the ASNF. The IFT initiated night time hazing efforts in the community of Alpine in response to pack locations near town and a nuisance incident.

Wolf Mountain Pack (collared f1792)

In February, f1792 was documented travelling with an uncollared animal. The pair has been together long enough to be named the Wolf Mountain Pack. They have been travelling in a new territory in the northeastern portion of the ASNF in Arizona and occasionally on the FAIR.

Single collared F1686

In February, the IFT documented F1686 traveling in the east central portion of the ASNF.

Single collared mp1858

In February, mp1858 was found dead in Arizona. The incident is under investigation.

Single collared F1431

At the end of February, F1431, a dispersing wolf from Mexico that had been released from captivity into Mexico in January 2020, traveled briefly in southeastern AZ and southwestern NM. At the time this update was prepared, F1431 had travelled back into Mexico.

ON THE FAIR:**Baldy Pack (collared AM1347 and F1560)**

In February, the Baldy Pack was located in their traditional territory in the eastern portion of the FAIR and north central portion of the ASNF.

Maverick Pack (collared AF1291 and f1828)

In February, the Maverick Pack was located within their traditional territory in the eastern portion of the FAIR and east central portion of the ASNF. AF1291 has been documented in its original territory and also making wide dispersals on the FAIR and in the eastern portion of the ASNF.

Tsay-O-Ah Pack (collared M1559 and AF1283)

In February, the Tsay-O-Ah Pack was located within their traditional territory in the eastern portion of the FAIR and occasionally documented north of their territory on the FAIR.

Tu dil hil Pack (collared AM1338, F1679, and fp1841)

In February, the Tu dil hil Pack was documented traveling in the eastern portion of the FAIR.

Poker Pack (collared M1582 and F1674)

In February, the Poker Pack was documented traveling in the eastern portion of the FAIR and the SCAR.

IN NEW MEXICO:**Cimmaron Mesa Pack (collared F1705)**

In February, the Cimmaron Mesa Pack was documented traveling in the northwestern portion of the Gila National Forest (GNF).

Colibri Pack (collared AM1555 and mp1856)

In February, the Colibri Pack was documented traveling together within a territory in the northern portion of the Gila Wilderness and the southern portion of the GNF.

Dark Canyon Pack (collared AM1354, AF1456, and mp1855)

In February, the Dark Canyon pack was documented traveling together within their traditional territory in the west central portion of the GNF.

Datil Mountain Pack (collared F1685)

In February, F1685 was documented traveling with an uncollared wolf in the west central portion of the GNF.

Frieborn Pack (collared AF1443 and M1829)

In February, Frieborn AF1443 was documented travelling with M1829 and an uncollared wolf in the north central portion of the GNF in New Mexico.

Iron Creek Pack (collared AM1240, AF1278, f1721, m1710, and f1712)

In February, m1710 and f1721 have been documented traveling independently in wide dispersal patterns across the GNF. They continued to return to their traditional pack territory. The rest of the Iron Creek Pack continued to use their territory in the northern portion of the Gila Wilderness and the southern portion of the GNF.

Lava Pack (collared AM1285 and AF1405)

In February, the Lava Pack was located within their traditional territory in the southeastern portion of the GNF.

Leon Pack (collared M1824 and F1578)

In February, the Leon Pack was documented within the northwestern portion of the GNF.

Leopold Pack (collared AM1293 and AF1346)

In February, the IFT documented the Leopold Pack within their territory in the northern portion of the Gila Wilderness.

Luna Pack (collared AM1158, AF1487, m1831, and m1838)

In February, the Luna Pack remained in their traditional territory in the north central portion of the GNF. Male 1831 and m1838 have been documented making dispersal movements across the east-central portion of the GNF, but continue to return to their natal territory.

Mangas Pack (collared AM1296, AF1439, M1832, mp1839, fp1840, mp1842, and mp1859)

In February, the Mangas Pack was located within their territory in the northwestern portion of the GNF. Male pup 1859 was captured by a private trapper, collared and released. In February, the IFT started two diversionary food caches to reduce conflict.

Prieto Pack (collared AF1251, mp1846, and mp1845)

In February, the Prieto Pack was located within their traditional territory in the north central portion of the GNF.

San Mateo Pack (collared AF1399 and mp1953)

In February, the San Mateo Pack continued to utilize their territory in the north central portion of

the GNF.

Shepherders Baseball Park (SBP) Pack (collared AF1553, f1853, and fp1837)

In February, the SBP Pack was located within their traditional territory in the north central portion of the GNF.

Squirrel Springs Pack (collared AM1349, AF1788, and mp1857)

In February, the Squirrel Springs Pack was located in the north central portion of the GNF.

Whitewater Canyon Pack (collared F1684)

In February, F1684 of the Whitewater Canyon Pack was located in the central portion of the GNF.

Wahoo Peak Pack (collared m1717 and f1836)

In February, the Wahoo Peak Pack was located within their territory in the east central portion of the GNF.

Single collared F1702

In February, F1702 was documented traveling across the north central portion of the GNF.

Single collared M1821

In February, M1821 was documented traveling with an uncollared wolf in the north central portion of the GNF.

Single collared M1693

In February, M1693 was documented in portions of the north central GNF in New Mexico.

Single collared fp1847

In February, fp1847 was documented traveling alone within the south and east central portion of the GNF and the San Mateo mountains.

Single collared M1681

In February, M1681 continued traveling with an uncollared wolf in the north central portion of the GNF.

MORTALITIES

During the month of February, the IFT documented one mortality. mp1858 was found dead in Arizona. This incident is under investigation.

INCIDENTS

During the month of February, there were 11 confirmed wolf depredation incidents on livestock. There were three nuisance incidents investigated in February. Following are investigations conducted by Wildlife Services during the month that were determined to be caused by wolves. Investigations of dead and injured livestock conducted by Wildlife Services during the month 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 monthly update.

On February 3, Wildlife Services investigated a dead cow in Catron County, NM. The investigation determined the cow was a confirmed wolf depredation.

On February 7, the IFT received a report of an ongoing nuisance incident where a wolf had reportedly been observed several times on a porch of a residence in Lakeside, AZ eating food left out for other animals. The IFT was provided a photograph of the animal being reported as a wolf and determined the animal was a domestic dog.

On February 8, Wildlife Services investigated a dead calf in Catron County, NM. The investigation determined the cow was a confirmed wolf depredation.

On February 11, Wildlife Services investigated a dead calf in Catron County, NM. The investigation determined the calf was a confirmed wolf depredation.

On February 11, Wildlife Services investigated two dead cows in Apache County, AZ. The investigation determined both cows were confirmed wolf depredations.

On February 13, Wildlife Services investigated two dead cows in Catron County, NM. The investigation determined both cows were confirmed wolf depredations.

On February 13, Wildlife Services investigated a dead cow in Catron County, NM. The investigation determined the cow was a confirmed wolf depredation.

On February 17, the IFT received a nuisance report of 3 wolves observed after dark near a residence in Alpine, AZ howling at the homeowner's dogs. The homeowner stated they were able to frighten the wolves away with human presence and making noise. The IFT determined the Sierra Blanca Pack had a GPS location near Alpine on the night of the incident and on several nights after. The IFT initiated over a week of nighttime hazing efforts around the community of Alpine following the nuisance incident. No further nuisance incidents were reported in the area.

On February 28, Wildlife Services investigated a dead cow in Catron County, NM. The investigation determined the cow was a confirmed wolf depredation.

On February 28, the IFT received a call of a dead elk found in pasture land in Nutrioso, AZ. The IFT responded and observe a dead elk within 300 yards of the nearest residence. The IFT determined the elk appeared to have been killed by wolves on the night of the February 27. The Hoodoo Pack had GPS locations in the area during that time. The IFT removed the carcass from the area to eliminate further attractant to wolves returning to the area.

On February 29, Wildlife Services investigated a dead cow and a dead calf in Catron County, NM. The investigation determined the cow and calf were both confirmed wolf depredations.

COMMUNICATION AND COORDINATION

Throughout the month of February the USFS Wolf Liaison to the IFT coordinated with the Alpine, Springerville, Quemado and Reserve Ranger Districts to mitigate wolf-livestock conflicts. More than 55 livestock permittees were contacted by members of the IFT via phone, email or text to communicate general wolf locations or other wolf related issues to try and reduce wolf-livestock conflicts.

In February, the IFT implemented the following proactive efforts to reduce livestock depredations: conducted 21 days/nights of hazing effort in areas having recent depredations that resulted in hazing wolves from depredation areas on ten occasions, removed two carcasses from depredation areas and conducted numerous contacts with livestock producers.

PROGRAM PERSONNEL

There are no personnel updates for the month of February.

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 an additional \$46,000 for a total reward amount of up to \$58,000, 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.