



Mexican Wolf Recovery Program Monthly Update

January 1- 31, 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

On January 15, the USFWS hosted an Executive Committee meeting in Albuquerque to discuss the IFT's hypotheses as to why wolf depredations on livestock have spiked during 2018 and 2019, and potential strategies to reverse the upward trend of depredations. The IFT presented general data that may provide insight into potential mechanisms associated with the increase in the depredation rate in order to guide management responses, as well as strategies the IFT has already implemented to reduce and mitigate livestock depredations in 2020.

On January 17, USFWS personnel met with Sierra County, NM, Commission members.

On January 21, the IFT started its annual helicopter count and capture operation to complete the 2019 end-of-year population survey. Captures that occurred during the helicopter operation are listed in the appropriate pack or single collared wolf updates below. Results of the 2019 annual count will be made available by the IFT in early March.

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 2018 was a minimum of 131 Mexican wolves in the wild (64 in AZ and 67 in NM). This was about a 12% increase in the population from a minimum of 117 wolves counted at the end of 2017. Population counts for 2019 continued in January. 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 January, there were 29 identified wolf packs (13 in AZ and 16 in NM) and 12 single collared wolves. There were 102 wolves with functioning radio collars that the IFT was actively monitoring. Not all of the wolves are collared. Studbook numbers following individual pack names below denote wolves with functioning radio collars.

IN ARIZONA:

Eagle Creek Pack (collared M1477)

In January, 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, f1696, f1697, and m1698)

In January, 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 January, the Hoodoo Pack was located within their traditional territory in the northeastern portion of the ASNF. During the annual helicopter count and capture, fp1936 was captured, collared and released.

Panther Creek Pack (AM1382, AF1683, and fp1939)

In January, the IFT documented the Panther Creek Pack in their territory in the east central portion of the ASNF.

Prime Canyon Pack (collared AM1471, AF1488, f1791, f1823, fp1916, fp1918, fp1919, fp1920, and mp1921)

In January, the IFT documented the Prime Canyon Pack within their territory in the east central portion of the ASNF. During the annual helicopter operations, fp1918 was captured, collared and released. In January, f1823 was documented making dispersal movements and travelling with mp1911 in the east central portion of the ASNF in Arizona and New Mexico.

Rocky Prairie Pack (collared AM1383 and AF1489)

In January, the IFT documented the Rocky Prairie Pack in the east central portion of the ASNF. During the annual helicopter operations, AM1383 was captured, collared and released back into their territory. AM1383, that had a failed radio telemetry collar, was identified as a previously fate unknown wolf from the Hawk's Nest Pack in Arizona.

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

In January, the Saffel Pack was located within their territory in the northeastern portion of the ASNF. During the annual helicopter operations, fp1851, mp1852 and mp1854 were captured, collared and released. In January, f1833 was found dead in Arizona. The incident is currently under investigation.

Sierra Blanca Pack (collared AM1571 and AF1550)

In January, the Sierra Blanca Pack was located in their territory in the northeastern portion of the ASNF. During the annual helicopter operations, AF1550 was captured, recollared and released.

New Pair (collared m1790 and f1701)

In January, m1790 (formerly of the Prime Canyon Pack) and f1701 (formerly of the Frieborn Pack) continued to be documented making dispersal movements and travelling together in the east central portion of the ASNF.

Single collared f1794

In January, f1794 was located dead in Arizona. The incident is currently under investigation.

Single collared f1825

In January, the IFT documented f1825 travelling with an uncollared wolf in the northern portion of the ASNF.

Single collared mp1911

In January, mp1911 was captured, collared and released during the annual helicopter operations. Male pup 1911 was identified as a wolf cross-fostered from captivity by the IFT into the Frieborn Pack in 2019 and was documented travelling with f1823 in the east central portion of the ASNF in Arizona and New Mexico.

Single collared F1686

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

Single collared mp1858

In January, mp1858 was captured, collared and released during the annual helicopter operations. At the time of the capture, mp1858 was traveling with F1686 in the east central portion of the ASNF.

Single collared f1792

In January, f1792 was documented traveling with an uncollared wolf in the northern portion of the ASNF and occasionally on the eastern portion of the FAIR.

Single collared F1668

In January, F1668, was located dead in Arizona. The incident is currently under investigation.

Single collared F1959

In January, F1959 was documented in the east central portion of the ASNF with m1704.

Single collared m1704

In January, during the annual helicopter count and operations, m1704 was captured, collared and released. m1704 was previously documented in 2018 as a pup from the Frieborn Pack in New Mexico. m1704 was documented travelling in the east central portion of the ASNF with F1959.

ON THE FAIR:

Baldy Pack (collared AM1347 and F1560)

In January, 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 January, 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 her original territory, but has also been documented making wide dispersals on the FAIR and in Arizona.

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

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

Poker Pack (collared M1582 and F1674)

In January, the Poker Pack was documented traveling in the eastern portion of the FAIR and the SCAR. During the annual helicopter operations, M1582 was captured, collared and released. M1582 was previously documented in 2017 as a pup from the San Mateo Pack in New Mexico.

IN NEW MEXICO:

Cimmaron Mesa Pack (collared F1705)

In January, the Cimmaron Mesa Pack was documented traveling in the northwestern portion of the Gila National Forest (GNF). During annual helicopter operations, F1705 was recaptured, collared and released.

Colibri Pack (collared AM1555 and mp1856)

In January, 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. During annual helicopter operations, mp1856 was captured, collared and released.

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

In January, the Dark Canyon pack was documented traveling together within their traditional territory in the west central portion of the GNF. During annual helicopter operations, mp1855 was captured, collared and released.

Datil Mountain Pack (collared F1685)

In January, F1685 was documented traveling with an uncollared wolf in the east central portion of the ASNF in New Mexico and Arizona.

Frieborn Pack (collared AF1443 and M1829)

In January, Frieborn AF1443 was documented with M1829 and an uncollared wolf in the north central portion of the GNF in New Mexico. They have been traveling together for >30 days and are both now considered part of the Frieborn Pack.

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

In January, m1710 and f1721 have been documented traveling independently in wide dispersal patterns across the MWEPA on the ASNF in Arizona and in New Mexico. 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. During the annual helicopter operations, AM1240 was recaptured, collared and released.

Lava Pack (collared AM1285 and AF1405)

In January, the Lava Pack was located within their traditional territory in the southeastern portion of the GNF. AM1285 was captured, collared, and released during the IFT's annual helicopter count and capture.

Leon Pack (collared M1824 and F1578)

In January, the Leon Pack was documented within the northwestern portion of the GNF in New Mexico.

Leopold Pack (collared AM1293 and AF1346)

In January, 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 January, 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. Male 1831 was documented traveling with Single F1702 on one occasion.

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

In January, the Mangas Pack was located within their territory in the northwestern portion of the GNF.

Prieto Pack (collared AF1251, mp1846, and mp1845)

In January, the Prieto Pack was located within their traditional territory in the north central portion of the GNF. During annual helicopter operations, mp1846 was captured, collared and released.

San Mateo Pack (collared AF1399 and mp1953)

In January, 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 January, the SBP Pack was located within their traditional territory in the north central portion of the GNF. During annual helicopter operations, f1853 was captured, collared and released.

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

In January, the Squirrel Springs Pack was located in the north central portion of the GNF. During annual helicopter operations, mp1857 was captured, collared and released.

Whitewater Canyon Pack (collared F1684)

In January, the F1684 of the Whitewater Canyon Pack was located in the south-central portion of the GNF. During the annual helicopter operations, F1684 was captured, recollared and released.

New Pair (collared m1717 and f1836)

In January, m1717 (formerly a Dark Canyon animal) and f1836 (formerly a Prieto animal) were documented traveling together in the east-central portion of the GNF.

Single collared F1702

In January, F1702 (formerly a Frieborn animal) was documented traveling with Single M1693 and Luna M1831 on separate occasions across the north central portion of the GNF.

Single collared M1821

In January, M1821 (formerly an Iron Creek animal) was documented traveling with an uncollared wolf in the north central portion of the GNF.

Single collared M1693

In January, M1693 was documented in portions of the north central GNF in New Mexico. M1693 was documented traveling with Single F1702 on several occasions. During annual helicopter operations, M1693 was recaptured, collared and released.

Single collared fp1847

In January, fp1847 was documented traveling alone during the IFT's annual helicopter operations within the south and east central portion of the GNF and the San Mateo mountains.

Single collared M1681

In January, M1681 (formerly a Hoodoo Pack member from Arizona) was documented traveling with an uncollared wolf in the north central portion of the GNF during the IFT's annual helicopter operations.

MORTALITIES

During the month of January, the IFT documented three wolf mortalities. The following wolves were located dead in Arizona during January; f1833 of the Saffel Pack, Single f1794, and Single F1668. All three incidents are currently under investigation.

INCIDENTS

During the month of January, there were seven confirmed wolf depredation incidents on livestock. There were two nuisance incidents investigated in January. Following are the investigations conducted by Wildlife Services 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 January 2, Wildlife Services investigated a dead yearling cow in Sierra County, NM. The investigation determined the cow was a confirmed wolf depredation.

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

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

On January 9, the IFT took a report from a homeowner in the area south of Vernon, AZ of an incident that occurred on December 2, 2019. The homeowner stated they observed an injured elk approximately 75 yards from their residence and evidence of the animal having been recently attacked. The homeowner stated they walked the property and observed five wolves approximately 200 yards from the residence. The wolves reportedly left, then were seen two additional times in the area later that day. Due to the amount of time that had passed between the incident and when

the IFT took the report, an on-site response was not conducted. GPS collar data showed Single f1792 had a location within two miles of the residence on the day of the incident.

On January 12, Wildlife Services investigated a dead calf in Catron County, NM. The investigation determined the calf was a confirmed wolf depredation.

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

On January 15, the IFT took a report of an animal observed after dark in a pasture with newborn livestock near a residence in Woodruff, AZ. The IFT determined the animal was likely a dog.

On January 18, Wildlife Services investigated two dead calves in Catron County, NM. The investigation determined both calves were confirmed wolf kills and classified as one depredation incident.

On January 26, Wildlife Services investigated a dead cow in Catron County, NM. The investigation determined the cow was a confirmed wolf depredation.

COMMUNICATION AND COORDINATION

Throughout the month of January 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 January, the IFT implemented the following proactive efforts to reduce livestock depredations: conducted 9 days/nights of hazing effort in areas having recent depredations that resulted in hazing wolves from depredation areas on 3 occasions, and conducted frequent contacts with livestock producers.

PROGRAM PERSONNEL

There are no personnel updates for the month of January.

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.