



News Release

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Newly released Mexican wolf doing well in Arizona

PHOENIX – The Mexican Wolf Reintroduction Project’s interagency field team successfully released a radio collared 4-year-old male Mexican wolf, designated M1133, last week in the Apache National Forest, and preliminary tracking data shows the wolf remains well within the Blue Range Wolf Recovery Area..

M1133 was snowmobiled in to the release site by Arizona Game and Fish and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service personnel and “hard released”, that is, released directly from the transport crate upon arrival rather than being placed in a temporary holding pen in that area for a period of time to acclimate (a soft release). M1133’s release was adjacent to the Bluestem pack’s territory in hopes that it will replace the pack’s breeding (alpha) male that was illegally killed in 2012. Surveys were conducted prior to the release to ensure that the Bluestem pack alpha female had not paired with another male wolf. The release was timed to coincide with normal early-season breeding activities. The Bluestem pack currently consists of four collared wolves; the collared alpha female, and three collared young of the year (m1275, m1277, f1280). At least 3 uncollared wolves have been documented with the pack, likely a yearling and two more young of the year.

M1133 was released to develop a more genetically robust wild Mexican wolf population. His offspring will be genetically different than existing wild wolves in the larger Mexican wolf population. This is significant for the genetic health of that population.

Mexican wolf 1133 was born in captivity April, 2008 and was transferred to the Sevilleta Wolf Management Facility in December 2008 (with his parents and littermate). He was prepared for the release and transported from Sevilleta to Arizona.

The release of M1133 is considered an “initial” release rather than a translocation because the animal was born and raised in captivity. A translocation, such as the two conducted in January of 2011, is when a wolf that was born in the wild but brought into captivity for some reason is then released back into the wild. The field team closely manages all initially-released wolves to reduce the potential of nuisance-related behaviors and livestock depredations once they are in the wild. In

this instance, since M1133 is wearing a radio collar and will be monitored closely to reduce conflict with livestock or human activity in the Apache Sitgreaves National Forest.

All initial wolf releases occur in Arizona in the primary recovery zone of the Blue Range Wolf Recovery Area in compliance with the existing federal 10(j) rule covering the reintroduction project. The last initial release of wolves occurred in 2008.

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