

TRAPPING EFFORTS BEGIN FOR TWO MEXICAN WOLVES

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has asked its partners in Mexican wolf management to initiate trapping for two wolves in the Aspen Pack. Between January and October the two animals, designated AM863 and F1046, have killed one horse and five cattle within the Gila National Forest; two of the depredations were on private inholdings outside of the established Mexican wolf reintroduction area.

As a result of both the depredations and the wolves being outside of the established boundaries, over the weekend, the Service initiated steps to trap the two animals and move them into captivity.

The Aspen pack of Mexican wolves currently consists of Alpha Male 863, Alpha Female 667, Female 1046, and an unspecified number of pups born this spring. If AF667 or the pups are captured during these removal efforts, they will be radio collared and re-released within the reintroduction area.

“It is anticipated that pack depredation behaviors will be disrupted with the capture and removal of these two members,” said Benjamin Tuggle, PhD, Service’s Southwest Regional Director. “By changing the pack dynamic, we anticipate the alpha female and the pups will return to feeding on wildlife. Removing wolves is always a tough call, but these decisions are made in the interest of the overall reintroduction efforts.”

The reintroduction of the Mexican wolf is a cooperative, multi-agency effort of the Arizona Game and Fish Department, New Mexico Department of Game and Fish, White Mountain Apache Tribe, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, USDA Forest Service and USDA-APHIS Wildlife Services.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the principal Federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting and enhancing fish, wildlife and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The Service manages the 95-million-acre National Wildlife Refuge System, which encompasses 547 national wildlife refuges, thousands of small wetlands and other special management areas. It also operates 69 national fish hatcheries, 64 fishery resources offices and 81 ecological services field stations. The agency enforces federal wildlife laws, administers the Endangered Species Act, manages migratory bird populations, restores nationally significant fisheries, conserves and restores wildlife habitat such as wetlands, and helps foreign and Native American tribal governments with their conservation efforts. It also oversees the Federal Assistance program, which distributes hundreds of millions of dollars in excise taxes on fishing and hunting equipment to state fish and wildlife agencies.