



## Mexican Wolf Recovery Program Quarterly Update

Third Quarter, 2020 (July, August and September)

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](http://azgfd.gov/wolf) or by visiting the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service website at [fws.gov/southwest/es/mexicanwolf](http://fws.gov/southwest/es/mexicanwolf). For information on the FAIR, call (928) 338-4385 ext. 226 or visit [wmatoutdoor.org](http://wmatoutdoor.org). Past updates may be viewed at these websites. Interested parties may [sign up](#) to receive this update electronically by visiting [azgfd.com](http://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 Quarterly Updates

In an effort to provide more concise information and to make this report more useful, beginning in October 2020, the report format has been changed and will begin to be provided on a quarterly basis. This third quarter report for 2020 contains information from the Mexican Wolf Recovery Program for the months of July, August and September. The fourth quarter report for 2020 will be made available in mid-January 2021.

On August 3 and August 10, the Mexican wolf Species Survival Plan (SSP) group held virtual planning and reporting meetings in lieu of the typical, in-person annual meeting. The SSP oversees the management of the Mexican wolf captive breeding program for the USFWS and meets annually with the primary purpose to discuss population demographics, management and research needs, as well as to make breeding and transfer recommendations for the upcoming year. Currently, the SSP houses 389 Mexican wolves in more than 50 facilities throughout the United States and Mexico. The next SSP meeting will be held in the summer 2021.

**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.

## **WOLF PACK UPDATES:**

Each wolf pack is listed with the studbook numbers of all wolves with functioning collars, not all wolves in the population are collared. Captures, mortalities, removals, and food caching are listed in the corresponding column for the given time period. The primary reason for food caching will be noted with “S” for supplemental and “D” for diversionary; the reason for a food cache may change over time. If a wolf dies, becomes fate unknown or is removed in the current time period, its studbook number will be removed from the pack column in the following time period. After three months of consistent dispersal behavior away from pack territory, a dispersing wolf is no longer considered a member of its originating pack and will be added to

a new row as a single wolf or member of a different pack. Packs actively raising pups will be listed as “Yes” in the “Raising pups” column. Any fields that require further comment will be annotated with “\*” and further comments are listed in the “Comments” column.

**ARIZONA:**

<b>Wolf Pack</b>	<b>Captures</b>	<b>Mortalities</b>	<b>Removals</b>	<b>Food cache</b>	<b>Raising pups (April – Sept)</b>	<b>Cross foster (April/May)</b>	<b>*Comments</b>
Collared Wolves							
<b>Bear Canyon</b> f1823	0	1*	0	0	No	No	M1911 was found dead in AZ in August. The incident is under investigation.
<b>Castle Rock</b> F1686	0	0	0	0	Yes	Yes	
<b>Cerro Trigo</b> M2555, mp2560	1*	1*	0	D	Yes	No	mp2560 was captured, collared and released. Mp2560 was captured, collared and released. AF1825 was found dead in AZ in July. The incident is under investigation.
<b>Eagle Creek</b> M1477	0	0	0	0	No	No	
<b>Elk Horn</b> AF1294, fp1867, fp1869	2*	0	0	S	Yes	Yes	F1696’s collar has failed. fp1867 and fp1869 were captured, collared and released. fp1867 is a cross-fostered wolf.
<b>Hoodoo</b> AM1290, AF1333, F1830, m1789, f1938, f1936, fp1890, fp1887, mp1888	4*	0	0	S	Yes	Yes	fp1890, fp1887, and mp1888 were captured collared and released. F1938 was captured and released. fp1890, fp1887, and mp1888 are cross-fostered wolves.
<b>Noble Mountain</b> AM1571, F1697	0	0	0	0	No	No	
<b>Panther Creek</b> AM1382, AF1683, f1939	0	0	0	0	Yes	No	
<b>Prime Canyon</b> f1791, f1916, f1918, f1919, f1920, m1921	0	0	0	S	Yes	Yes	AM1471’s and AF1488’s collars have failed.
<b>Rocky Prairie</b> AM1383, AF1489	0	2*	0	S	Yes	Yes	Two uncollared pups from the Rocky Prairie Pack were found dead in AZ in September. The incidents are under investigation.
<b>Rose</b> M1704, F1828	0	0	0	0	No	No	
<b>Saffel</b> AF1567, f1844, f1851, m1852, m1854	1*	0	0	D	No	No	m1852 was captured and released by the IFT.

<b>Sierra Blanca</b> AF1550	0	0	0	0	No	No	
--------------------------------	---	---	---	---	----	----	--

**FAIR:**

<b>Wolf Pack</b> Collared Wolves	<b>Captures</b>	<b>Mortalities</b>	<b>Removals</b>	<b>Food Cache</b>	<b>Raising pups</b> <b>(April – Sept)</b>	<b>Cross foster</b> <b>(April/May)</b>	<b>*Comments</b>
<b>Baldy</b> AM1347	0	0	0	0	No	No	F1560's collar has failed.
<b>Maverick</b> AF1291	0	0	0	0	No	No	
<b>Poker</b> AM1582	0	0	0	0	No	No	
<b>Tsay-O-Ah</b> M1559, AF1283	0	0	0	0	No	No	
<b>Tu dil hil</b> AM1338, AF1679, f1841	0	0	0	0	Yes	No	

**NEW MEXICO:**

<b>Wolf Pack</b> Collared Wolves	<b>Captures</b>	<b>Mortalities</b>	<b>Removals</b>	<b>Food Cache</b>	<b>Raising pups</b> <b>(April – Sept)</b>	<b>Cross foster</b> <b>(April/May)</b>	<b>*Comments</b>
<b>Cimmaron Mesa</b> F1705	0	0	0	0	No	No	Den failed
<b>Colibri</b> AM1555, M1856	0	0	0	0	Yes	No	
<b>Dark Canyon</b> AM1354, AF1456, m1855	0	0	0	S	Yes	Yes	
<b>Frieborn</b> AF1443, f1924	1*	0	0	S	Yes	No	f1924 was captured, collared and released on site by the IFT during the quarter.
<b>Gatlin Canyon</b> M1838	0	0	0	0	No	No	
<b>Iron Creek</b> AM1240, A1278, F1721, M1710, F1712*	0	0	0	S*	Yes	Yes	F1712, a cross-fostered wolf from 2018, also denned and produced pups in 2020. Two supplementary food caches were maintained, one at each den site.
<b>Lava</b> AM1285, AF1405	0	0	0	0	Yes	No	
<b>Leon</b> AM1824, AF1578	0	0	0	0	Yes	No	
<b>Leopold</b>	0	0	0	0	Yes	No	

AM1293, AF1346							
<b>Luna</b> AM1158	0	0	0	0	Yes	No	AF1487's collar has failed
<b>Mangas</b> AM1296, AF1439, M1832, M1842, M1859	0	0	0	D	Yes	No	
<b>Owl Canyon</b> m1790, f1701	0	0	0	0	No	No	Den failed
<b>Pitchfork Canyon</b> F1853, mp2559	1*	0	0	D	Yes	No	mp2559 was captured, collared and released on site by the IFT during the quarter.
<b>Point of Rocks</b> M1717	0	0	0	0	No	No	
<b>San Mateo</b> AF1399, m1950, m1953, fp2503	2*	0	0	S	Yes	Yes	m1950 and fp2503 were captured, collared and released on site by the IFT during the quarter. fp2503 is a cross foster pup from 2020.
<b>Shepherders Baseball Park (SBP)</b> AF1553, m2557, fp2558	2*	0	0	D	Yes	No	m2557 and fp2558 were captured, collared and released on site by the IFT during the quarter.
<b>Squirrel Springs</b> AM349, AF1788, m1857	0	0	0	0	Yes	No	
<b>Wahoo Peak</b> f1836	0	1	0	0	No	No	f1836 was located dead in NM in July. The incident is under investigation. This is no longer a pack following the mortality of f1836. M1717 is now in the Point of Rocks Pack.
<b>Whiskey Creek</b> M1681, mp2556	1	0	0	D	Yes	No	mp2556 was captured, collared and released on site by the IFT during the quarter.
<b>Whitewater Canyon</b> F1684	0	0	0	0	No	No	
<b>Single</b> M1693	0	0	0	0	No	No	
<b>Single</b> F1847	0	0	0	0	No	No	
<b>Single</b> M1831	0	0	0	0	No	No	
<b>Single</b> m1946	0	0	0	0	No	No	
<b>Single</b> F1837	0	0	0	0	No	No	
<b>Single</b> M1875	0	0	0	0	No	No	

## INCIDENTS

The following are investigations conducted by Wildlife Services during the third quarter that were determined to be caused by wolves. Investigations of dead and injured livestock conducted by Wildlife Services during the time period 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 quarterly update.

## DEPREDATIONS

	Confirmed Wolf		Total Confirmed Wolf killed or died from injuries (2020)	Probable Wolf		Total Probable Wolf by State (2020)
	Killed or died from injuries	Injured		Killed or died from injuries	Injured	
Arizona	19	2	45	2	0	2
New Mexico	19	5	95	0	0	1
<b>2020 Total</b>			140			3

White cells contain totals for the given time period, grey cells contain totals for the year.

## PUBLIC INCIDENTS

On July 21, a private citizen observed two wolves chasing cattle along a road from an ATV. The estimated distance from the citizen and the wolves was approximately 40 meters. The citizen reported that he has seen wolves multiple times before and identified a radio collar on one of the wolves. The observation lasted approximately one minute before the wolves left the area. This nuisance event occurred on Forest Service Land in Catron County, NM.

On August 17, the IFT took a nuisance report from a resident in the Vernon area in Apache County who stated wolves had attacked his goats, killing one and injuring another, behind his residence on the night of August 16. The resident stated he had seen what he believed was a wolf on August 17

and stated his daughter had an encounter at a close distance with what she believed was a wolf near the residence on the night of August 16. Wildlife Services and a biologist from the AZGFD responded to the area of the incident. Wildlife Services conducted an investigation of the scene and of the killed and injured livestock. Wildlife Services determined the goats had been attacked by domestic dogs. There was no evidence of Mexican wolf presence in the area.

On August 18, a private citizen reported seeing two wolves chasing elk behind their house. This nuisance event occurred on a private inholding within the Gila National Forest in Catron County, NM. The event was very quick and the wolves left the area still chasing elk. The citizen reported that they have outside dogs and they thought the wolves were too close.

**PROACTIVE MANAGEMENT**

<b>State</b>	<b>Hazing efforts</b> (separate attempts to haze wolves)	<b>Hazing events</b> (successful hazing of a wolf)	<b>Diversionsary food caches*</b>	<b>Carcasses removed</b>	<b>Proactive Equipment Issued</b> (RAG boxes, fox lights, fladry)
<b>Arizona</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>New Mexico</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>

All cells contain totals for the given time period.

\*Includes supplemental food caches as these also served as diversionsary food caches this year.

**PROGRAM PERSONNEL**

There are no personnel updates for the third quarter.

**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 additional funding for a total reward amount of up to \$37,000, 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.