



## Mexican Wolf Recovery Program Monthly Update

April 1- 30, 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](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 Monthly Updates**

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has published a Federal Register notice to open a 60-day public scoping period for the development of a supplemental environmental impact statement as part of our court-ordered revision of the 2015 Mexican wolf final 10(j) rule. Comments are due by June 15, 2020. The USFWS will accept written comments submitted by one of the following methods:

(1) Electronically: Go to the Federal rulemaking

Portal: <https://www.regulations.gov/document?D=FWS-R2-ES-2020-0007-0001>. Follow the

instructions for submitting comments to Docket No. FWS-R2-ES-2020-0007, which is the docket number for this notice of intent.

(2) *By hard copy*: Submit comments by U.S. mail or hand-delivery to: Public Comments Processing, Attn: FWS-R2-ES-2020-0007; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, MS: PRB/PERMA (JAO/1N), 5275 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church, VA 22041-3803.

On April 30, 2020, the USFWS held a teleconference with potential Cooperating Agencies for the upcoming development of a supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (sEIS). The sEIS will analyze the effects of proposed revisions to the 2015 Mexican wolf final 10(j) rule. Cooperating Agencies may include counties, federal or state agencies, or Tribes with land or management jurisdiction in the project area that sign on to a Memorandum of Understanding with the U.S Fish and Wildlife Service.

**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 April, there were 36 named wolf packs (17 in AZ and 19 in NM) and 9 single collared wolves. There were 97 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 Pack (collared m1911 and f1823)**

In April, the Bear Canyon Pack continued to be documented travelling in the east central portion of the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest (ASNF) in Arizona and New Mexico. They pack showed behavior consistent with denning in April.

### **Castle Rock Pack (F1686)**

In April, the Castle Rock Pack was documented in the east central portion of the ASNF. The pack showed behavior consistent with denning at the end of the month.

### **Cerro Trigo Pack (collared F1825)**

In April, the Cerro Trigo Pack was located in their territory in the northeastern portion of the ASNF. The Cerro Trigo Pack showed behavior consistent with denning in April.

### **Eagle Creek Pack (collared M1477)**

In April, the IFT documented M1477 in the pack's territory in the east central portion of the ASNF.

### **Elk Horn Pack (collared AF1294, F1696 and M1698)**

In April, the Elk Horn Pack was located within their traditional territory in the northeastern portion of the ASNF in Arizona and New Mexico. Subadult f1696 continued making small dispersal movements away from the pack, but continued to return to its natal territory. This month, three neonatal pups, born in captivity, were cross-fostered by the IFT into the Elk Horn den. The IFT maintained a food cache near the den as part of the cross-foster effort and to reduce the potential for livestock-related conflict. The Elk Horn Pack has continued to exhibit behavior and movements consistent with denning following the cross-foster operation.

### **Hoodoo Pack (collared AM1290, AF1333, F1830, m1789, f1938, and f1936)**

In April, the Hoodoo Pack was located within their traditional territory in the northeastern portion of the ASNF. This month, four neonatal pups, born in captivity, were cross-fostered by the IFT into the Hoodoo den. Two natal pups were removed from the Hoodoo Pack and cross-fostered into a captive-born litter at Sevilleta Wolf Management Facility. The IFT maintained a food cache near the den as part of the cross-foster effort and to reduce the potential for livestock-related conflict. The Hoodoo Pack continued to exhibit behavior and movements consistent with denning after the cross-foster operation was conducted.

### **Panther Creek Pack (AM1382, AF1683, and f1939)**

In April, the IFT documented the Panther Creek Pack in their territory in the east central portion of the ASNF. Subadult f1939 continued to be documented making dispersal movements across the east central portion of the ASNF, but returning to its natal territory. The pack showed behavior consistent with denning in April.

### **Prime Canyon Pack (collared AM1471, AF1488, f1791, f1916, f1918, f1919, f1920, and m1921)**

In April, the IFT documented the Prime Canyon Pack within their territory in the east central portion of the ASNF. The IFT continued hazing efforts and initiated a diversionary food cache in response to pack locations in the community of Alpine. This month, one neonatal pup, born in captivity, was cross-fostered by the IFT into the Prime Canyon den. The Prime Canyon Pack continued to exhibit behavior and movements consistent with denning after the cross-foster operation was conducted.

**Rocky Prairie Pack (collared AM1383 and AF1489)**

In April, the IFT documented the Rocky Prairie Pack in the east central portion of the ASNF. The pack showed behavior consistent with denning at the end of the month.

**Rose Pack (collared F1959 and m1704)**

In April, the IFT documented F1959 and m1704 continuing to travel together in the east central portion of the ASNF and on the SCAR. At the end of the month, F1959 and four pups were removed from the SCAR to captivity by the USFWS at the request of the San Carlos Apache Tribe.

**Saffel Pack (collared AF1567, f1844, f1851, m1852, and m1854)**

In April, the Saffel Pack was located within their territory in the northeastern portion of the ASNF.

**Sierra Blanca Pack (collared AM1571 and AF1550)**

In April, AF1550 was located in its territory in the northeastern portion of the ASNF. AM1571 has been documented making movements outside of the pack's territory and travelling with F1697.

**Single collared F1697**

In April, F1697 (from the Elk Horn Pack) was documented travelling with AM1571 of the Sierra Blanca Pack in the east central portion of the ASNF. In the month of April F1697 showed behavior consistent with denning.

**Single collared AM1441**

In April, AM1441 of the Saffel Pack was documented making large movements in the northeastern portion of the ASNF.

**ON THE FAIR:**

**Baldy Pack (collared AM1347 and F1560)**

In April, 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)**

In April, the Maverick Pack was located within their traditional territory in the eastern portion of the FAIR and east central portion of the ASNF. Additionally, AF1291 was documented making wide dispersals on the FAIR and the eastern portion of the ASNF.

**Poker Pack (collared M1582 and F1674)**

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

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

In April, 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 f1841)**

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

**Single collared f1828**

In April, f1828 was documented traveling in the eastern portion of the FAIR and east central portion of the ASNF.

**IN NEW MEXICO:**

**Cimmaron Mesa Pack (collared F1705)**

In April, the Cimmaron Mesa Pack was documented traveling in the northwestern portion of the Gila National Forest (GNF). The Cimmaron Mesa pack displayed behavior consistent with denning in April.

**Colibri Pack (collared AM1555 and m1856)**

In April, 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 m1855)**

In April, the Dark Canyon Pack was documented traveling together within their traditional territory in the west central portion of the GNF. The Dark Canyon Pack showed behavior consistent with denning in April

**Datil Mountain Pack (collared F1685)**

In April, F1685 was documented traveling in the west central portion of the GNF.

**Frieborn Pack (collared AF1443 and M1829)**

In April, the Frieborn Pack was documented in the north central portion of the GNF in New Mexico. The Frieborn Pack showed behavior consistent with denning in April.

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

In April, the Iron Creek pack was documented traveling throughout their territory in the northern portion of the Gila Wilderness and the southern portion of the GNF. Subadults m1710 and f1712 showed signs of dispersal in April, but continued to return to traditional Iron Creek territory. In April, a private trapper captured m1710 and notified the IFT. The IFT responded, processed, recollared and released the wolf.

**Lava Pack (collared AM1285 and AF1405)**

In April, the Lava Pack was located within their traditional territory in the southeastern portion of the GNF. The pack showed behavior consistent with denning in April.

**Leon Pack (collared M1824 and F1578)**

In April, the Leon Pack was documented within their territory in northwestern portion of the GNF, and showed behavior consistent with denning.

**Leopold Pack (collared AM1293 and AF1346)**

In April, the IFT documented the Leopold Pack within their territory in the northern portion of the Gila Wilderness. The Leopold pack displayed behavior consistent with denning in April.

**Luna Pack (collared AM1158, AF1487)**

In April, the Luna Pack remained in their traditional territory in the north central portion of the GNF. The IFT maintained a diversionary food cache for this pack to reduce wolf-livestock conflict. The Luna Pack showed behavior consistent with denning in April.

**Mangas Pack (collared AM1296, AF1439, M1832, m1842, and m1859)**

In April, the Mangas Pack was located within their territory in the northwestern portion of the GNF. The IFT continued to maintain a diversionary food cache to reduce conflict.

**Owl Canyon Pack (collared m1790 and f1701)**

In April, m1790 and f1701 displayed denning behavior and were documented travelling together in the western portion of the GNF.

**Prieto Pack (collared AF1251, m1846, and m1875)**

In April, the Prieto Pack was located within their traditional territory in the north-central portion of the GNF. The IFT maintained a diversionary food cache for the pack to reduce conflict. In April, a private trapper captured an uncollared male wolf (m1875) and notified the IFT. The IFT responded, processed, collared and released the wolf. The IFT is waiting on genetic analysis to confirm the wolf is from the Prieto Pack. In April, a private trapper captured AF1251 and notified the IFT. The IFT removed AF1251 to captivity due to depredation history and the wolf died the following day; necropsy is pending.

**San Mateo Pack (collared AF1399 and m1953)**

In April, the San Mateo Pack continued to utilize their territory in the north central portion of the GNF. The pack showed behavior consistent with denning.

**Sheepherders Baseball Park (SBP) Pack (collared AF1553, F1853, and f1837)**

In April, the SBP Pack was located within their traditional territory in the north central portion of the GNF. Both AF1553 and F1853 showed behavior consistent with denning in separate portions of SBP's traditional territory in April.

**Squirrel Springs Pack (collared AM1349, AF1788, and m1857)**

In April, the Squirrel Springs Pack was located in the north central portion of the GNF. The Squirrel Springs Pack showed behavior consistent with denning in April.

**Wahoo Peak Pack (collared m1717 and f1836)**

In April, the Wahoo Peak Pack was documented travelling separately within their territory in the east central portion of the GNF and within the Cibola National Forest (CNF).

**Whiskey Creek Pack (collared M1681)**

In April, the Whiskey Creek Pack was located within their territory in the north central portion of the GNF and showed behavior consistent with denning.

**Whitewater Canyon Pack (collared F1684)**

In April, F1684 of the Whitewater Canyon Pack was located in the central and eastern portion of the GNF.

**Single collared F1702**

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

**Single collared M1693**

In April, M1693 was documented making wide dispersal movements across portions of the south central GNF in New Mexico and the east-central ASNF in AZ.

**Single collared F1847**

In April, f1847 was documented traveling alone within the south and east central portion of the GNF.

**Single collared M1831**

In April, M1831 was documented traveling across the north-central portion of the GNF in NM and the northeastern portion of the ASNF in AZ.

**Single collared M1838**

In April, m1838 was documented traveling across the central portion of the GNF. In April, a private trapper captured m1838, notified the IFT, and the IFT responded, processed, recollared and released the wolf.

**Single collared m1946**

In April m1946 was located within the northern San Mateo Mountains of the CNF.

**MORTALITIES**

In April, the IFT documented a dead uncollared adult male wolf in New Mexico; the incident is under investigation. From January 1 to April 30, 2020, the IFT has documented 10 wolf mortalities.

**INCIDENTS**

During the month of April, there were 25 confirmed wolf depredation incidents on livestock, one probable wolf depredation on livestock and two livestock injured by wolves. There were three

nuisance incidents investigated in April. From January 1, 2020 to April 30, 2020, there have been a total of 56 depredation incidents in New Mexico and a total of 10 depredation incidents in Arizona.

The 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 April 1, the IFT received a report of an interaction where a rancher in Greenlee County, AZ scared two wolves off of a dead livestock calf. As the rancher picked up the calf to secure the remains for a depredation investigation by Wildlife Services, he stated he observed one of the wolves running in his direction which caused him to retreat. He stated he did not see how close the wolf got to him and the wolves eventually left the area. Due to delayed reporting, the IFT did not conduct a site visit.

On April 2, Wildlife Services investigated a dead bull in Catron County, NM. The investigation determined the bull was a confirmed wolf depredation.

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

On April 4, Wildlife Services investigated a dead calf in Greenlee County, AZ. The investigation determined the calf was a confirmed wolf depredation.

On April 5, Wildlife Services investigated a dead cow and a dead calf in Catron County, NM. The investigation determined the cow and the calf were each confirmed wolf depredations.

On April 6, Wildlife Services investigated an injured calf and a dead cow in Catron County, NM. The investigation determined the injured calf was confirmed wolf and the dead cow was a confirmed wolf depredation.

On April 9, Wildlife Services investigated a dead cow and calf in Greenlee County, AZ. The investigation determined the two animals were confirmed as having been killed by wolves and classified as one depredation incident.

On April 10, Wildlife Services investigated a dead cow in Catron County, NM. The investigation determined the cow was a confirmed wolf depredation.

On April 14, Wildlife Services investigated a dead calf in Catron County, NM. The investigation determined the calf was a confirmed wolf depredation.

On April 15, Wildlife Services investigated a dead cow in Catron County, NM. The investigation determined the cow was a confirmed wolf depredation.

On April 16, Wildlife Services investigated two dead cows in Catron County, NM. The investigation determined both cows were confirmed wolf depredations.

On April 16, Wildlife Services investigated a dead calf in Apache County, AZ. The investigation determined the calf was a confirmed wolf depredation.

On April 17, Wildlife Services investigated a dead calf in Apache County, AZ. The investigation determined the calf was a confirmed wolf depredation.

On April 18, the IFT investigated a report of a wolf that was observed walking parallel to children and a dog approximately 200 yards away near a residence in Nutrioso, AZ. An adult yelled at the wolf causing it to leave the area. The IFT responded, conducted sign search in the area and deployed a remote camera in the area.

On April 19, Wildlife Services investigated a dead cow in Catron County, NM. The investigation determined the cow was a confirmed wolf depredation.

On April 20, Wildlife Services investigated a dead calf in Apache County, AZ. The investigation determined the calf was a confirmed wolf depredation.

On April 21, Wildlife Services investigated a dead cow and calf in Catron County, NM. The investigation determined the cow was a confirmed wolf depredation and the calf was a probable wolf depredation.

On April 22, the IFT investigated an incident where a juvenile was reportedly hiking on the ASNF west of Alpine, AZ and was approached by two barking wolves. The juvenile reportedly discharged a firearm into the base of a tree near the wolves which caused the animals to retreat. The juvenile ran off and did not see the animals again. The IFT investigation did not provide evidence to either corroborate or refute the incident.

On April 23, Wildlife Services investigated a dead cow in Catron County, NM. The investigation determined the cow was a confirmed wolf depredation.

On April 24, Wildlife Services investigated a dead bull, dead cow and an injured calf in Catron County, NM. The investigations determined the bull and cow were confirmed wolf depredations and the calf was a confirmed wolf injury.

On April 24, Wildlife Services investigated a dead calf in Apache County, AZ. The investigation determined the calf was a confirmed wolf depredation.

On April 25, Wildlife Services investigated two dead cows in Catron County, NM. The investigations determined both cows were confirmed wolf depredations.

On April 25, Wildlife Services investigated an injured calf that was put down due to its injuries in Catron County, NM. The investigation determined the calf was injured by wolves and was a confirmed wolf depredation.

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

### **COMMUNICATION AND COORDINATION**

In April, the IFT implemented the following proactive efforts to reduce livestock depredations: conducted 24 days/nights of hazing effort in areas having recent depredations that resulted in hazing wolves from depredation areas on 18 occasions, removed two carcasses from a depredation area, maintained seven diversionary food caches, and conducted frequent telephonic contacts with livestock producers in depredation areas.

In April, the IFT attended Annual Validation Meetings for livestock permittees on the Springerville and Alpine Ranger Districts in effort to provide recovery program and wolf activity information with the goal of working collaboratively with the permittees and USFS to reduce wolf-livestock conflict this year.

Throughout the month of April the USFS Wolf Liaison to the IFT coordinated with the Alpine, Springerville, Clifton, 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.

### **PROGRAM PERSONNEL**

There are no personnel updates for the month of April.

### **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.