



## **Mexican Wolf Recovery Program Monthly Update**

May 1- 31, 2019

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), USDA Forest Service (USFS), USDA-Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Wildlife Services (USDA-APHIS WS), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the White Mountain Apache Tribe (WMAT).

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 FAIR 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**

In May, USFWS staff attended a Catron County Commissioner's Meeting in Reserve, NM to discuss the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for Mexican Wolf Recovery and Management. The Commission agreed to submit a request to become a Cooperating Entity under the MOU. An entity requesting Signatory status shall submit its request to the MOU Signatories in the form of a document defining the requesting agency's proposed responsibilities pursuant to this MOU. Inclusion of additional Signatories shall be approved by majority voice concurrence of current Signatories. On approval, the new Signatory must comply with all aspects of the MOU as it was structured when its request for Signatory status was approved.

**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.** 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 May, there were 28 identified wolf packs (14 in AZ and 14 in NM) and four single collared wolves. There were 81 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 May, the IFT continued to document M1477 traveling with an uncollared wolf in the pack’s territory in the east central portion of the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest (ASNF).

#### **Elk Horn Pack (collared AF1294, F1668, M1671, m1695, f1696, and f1697)**

In May, 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, M1681, F1830, and m1789)**

In May, the Hoodoo Pack was located within their traditional territory in the northeastern portion of the ASNF. 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 in May.

**Panther Creek Pack (AM1382 and AF1683)**

In May, the IFT documented the Panther Creek Pack in their territory in the east central portion of the ASNF. The IFT continued to maintain a supplemental food cache near the den as part of the cross-foster efforts. The Panther Creek Pack continued to show behavior consistent with denning in May.

**Pine Spring Pack (collared AM1394, f1794, and f1825)**

In May, the Pine Spring Pack was located within their territory in the north central portion of the ASNF. The IFT continued to maintain a diversionary food cache for this pack to reduce potential for wolf-livestock conflict.

**Prime Canyon Pack (collared AM1471, AF1488, m1790, f1791, and f1823)**

In May, the IFT documented the Prime Canyon Pack within their territory in the east central portion of the ASNF. The IFT maintained a supplemental food cache near the den as part of the cross-foster effort and to reduce the potential for conflict. The Prime Canyon Pack continued to show behavior consistent with denning in May.

**Rocky Prairie Pack (collared F1489)**

In May, the IFT documented F1489 in the east central portion of the ASNF. The Rocky Prairie Pack continued to show behavior consistent with denning in May.

**Saffel Pack (collared AM1441, AF1567, f1792 and f1833)**

In May, the Saffel Pack was located within their territory in the northeastern portion of the ASNF. This month, one neonatal pup, born in captivity at the Wolf Conservation Center in New York, was cross-fostered by the IFT into the Saffel Pack den. The IFT maintained a supplemental food cache near the den as part of the cross-foster effort and to reduce potential for wolf-livestock conflict. The Saffel Pack continued to show behavior consistent with denning after the cross-foster operation.

**Sierra Blanca Pack (collared M1571 and F1550)**

In May, the Sierra Blanca Pack was located in their territory in the northeastern portion of the ASNF. The Sierra Blanca Pack exhibited behavior consistent with denning in May.

**Single collared M1574**

In May, the IFT documented M1574 traveling in the east central portion of the ASNF and the SCAR. M1574 was documented traveling with F1959 during the month of May.

**Single collared F1686**

In May, the IFT documented subadult F1686 in the east central portion of the ASNF and on the FAIR.

**Single collared M1829**

In May, M1829 was documented making wide dispersal movements in the GNF in New Mexico and in the east central portion of the ASNF.

**Single collared F1959**

In May, an uncollared female wolf F1959 was caught, collared and released in the east central portion of the ASNF. F1959 was documented travelling with M1574 during the month of May.

**ON THE FAIR:****Baldy Pack (collared AM1347 and F1560)**

In May, the Baldy Pack was located in their traditional territory in the eastern portion of the FAIR and north central portion of the ASNF. The Baldy Pack was not documented as denning this season.

**Maverick Pack (collared AF1291 and f1828)**

In May, the Maverick Pack was located within their traditional territory in the eastern portion of the FAIR and east central portion of the ASNF.

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

In May, 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. The Tsay-O-Ah Pack was documented localizing during the denning season, but no den was found in the area of the localization.

**Tu dil hil Pack (collared F1679 and AM1338)**

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

**Poker Pack (collared F1674)**

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

**IN NEW MEXICO:****Dark Canyon Pack (collared AM1354, AF1456, and m1717)**

In May, the Dark Canyon Pack was documented traveling together within their traditional territory, in the west central portion of the Gila National Forest (GNF). The Dark Canyon Pack continued to show behavior consistent with denning in May.

**Datil Mountain Pack (collared F1685)**

In May, the Datil Mountain Pack traveled within their traditional territory in the western portion of the Cibola National Forest (CNF) and the western portion of the ASNF.

**Frieborn Pack (collared AF1443, f1701, and f1702)**

In May, the Frieborn Pack was documented within their territory in the east central portion of the ASNF in New Mexico and Arizona. The IFT maintained a supplemental food cache near the den. The Frieborn Pack continued to exhibit behavior and movements consistent with denning in May.

**Iron Creek Pack (collared AM1240, AF1278, M1555, F1670, M1821, f1721, m1710, and f1712)**

In May, the Iron Creek Pack continued to utilize their territory in the northern portion of the Gila Wilderness and the southern portion of the GNF. The Iron Creek Pack exhibited behavior consistent with denning in May.

**Lava Pack (collared AM1285, AF1405, and m1715)**

In May, the Lava Pack was located within their traditional territory in the southeastern portion of the GNF. The Lava Pack continued to exhibit behavior consistent with denning in May. The IFT did not locate m1715 during May.

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

In May, the Leon Pack was documented within the northwestern portion of the Gila National Forest in New Mexico.

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

In May, the IFT documented the Leopold Pack within their territory in the northern portion of the Gila Wilderness. The Leopold Pack continued to exhibit behavior consistent with denning in May.

**Luna Pack (collared AM1158, AF1487, and m1831)**

In May, the Luna Pack remained in their traditional territory in the north central portion of the GNF. The Luna Pack continued to exhibit behavior consistent with denning in May.

**Mangas Pack (collared AM1296, AF1439, F1705, and M1832)**

In May, the Mangas Pack was located within their territory in the northwestern portion of the GNF. The IFT continued to maintain a diversionary food cache for the Mangas Pack to reduce potential conflict with livestock. The Mangas Pack continued to show behavior consistent with denning in May.

**Prieto Pack (collared AM1398, AF1251, and m1827)**

In May, the Prieto Pack was located within their traditional territory in the north central portion of the GNF. The IFT continued to maintain a diversionary food cache for the Prieto Pack to reduce potential for conflict with livestock in May. The Prieto Pack continued to show behavior consistent with denning in May.

**San Mateo Pack (collared AF1399 and f1822)**

In May, the San Mateo Pack continued to utilize their territory in the north central portion of the GNF. This month, two pups, born in captivity at the Sedgwick Zoo in Kansas, were cross-fostered by the IFT into the San Mateo Pack den. The IFT maintained a supplemental food cache near the den as part of the cross-foster effort and to reduce potential for wolf-livestock conflict.

The San Mateo Pack continued to exhibit behavior consistent with denning in May.

**Shepherders Baseball Park (SBP) Pack (collared AF1553)**

In May, AF1553 was confirmed traveling in the traditional territory of the SBP Pack in the north central portion of the GNF. During May, AF1553 exhibited behavior consistent with denning.

**Squirrel Springs Pack (collared F1788 and M1349)**

In May, the Squirrel Springs Pack was located in the north central portion of the GNF. The Squirrel Springs Pack continued to exhibit behavior consistent with denning in May.

**Whitewater Canyon Pack (F1684 and M1827)**

In May, the Whitewater Canyon Pack continued to travel in the north central portion of the GNF.

**MORTALITIES**

There were no documented mortalities during the month of May. From January 1, 2019 to May 31, 2019, there have been a total of six documented wolf mortalities.

**INCIDENTS**

During the month of May, there were nine confirmed and one probable wolf depredation incidents on livestock. There were two nuisance incidents in May. From January 1, 2019 to May 31, 2019 there have been a total of 79 confirmed and six probable wolf depredation incidents in New Mexico and 19 confirmed wolf depredation incidents in Arizona.

On May 1, Wildlife Services investigated a dead bull in Catron County, NM. The investigation determined the bull was a confirmed wolf depredation.

On May 1, the IFT took a report of three wolves in the town of Alpine, AZ. The IFT responded and removed an old elk carcass from the property. No wolves were present when the IFT arrived at the location of the sighting. Collar data indicated wolves from the Prime Canyon Pack had been in the area of the sighting.

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

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

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

On May 6, Wildlife Services investigated a dead calf in Apache County, AZ. The investigation determined the calf was a confirmed wolf depredation.

On May 6, Wildlife Services investigated a dead cow in Apache County, AZ. The investigation determined the cow was a confirmed wolf depredation.

On May 8, the IFT took a report of five wolves chasing elk in an open meadow and feeding on

an elk carcass in the town of Alpine, AZ. The IFT responded and removed the elk carcass from the property to eliminate further attractant of wolves returning to the area. The wolves had left by the time the IFT arrived. Collar data indicated the wolves observed in town were from the Prime Canyon Pack.

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

On May 16, Wildlife Services investigated an injured cow that was later put down in Catron County, NM. The investigation determined the cow was a probable wolf depredation.

On May 22, Wildlife Services investigated a dead calf in Greenlee County, AZ. The investigation determined the calf was a confirmed wolf depredation.

On May 23, Wildlife Services investigated a dead calf in Greenlee County, AZ. The investigation determined the calf was a confirmed wolf depredation.

### **COMMUNICATION AND COORDINATION**

On May 7, AZGFD staff provided a Program update to the Apache County Board of Supervisors in Saint Johns, AZ.

On May 7, WMAT staff gave an update on the KNNB Radio Show in Whiteriver, AZ.

On May 13, USFWS staff and residents of Catron County met with Congressional Representative Xotchil Torres-Small in Las Cruces, NM, to discuss livestock depredations by wolves and compensation.

On May 17, AZGFD staff provided a Program update to the Gila County Cattle Growers in Miami, AZ.

On May 21, USFWS staff met with USFS staff in the USFS R3 Regional Office, Albuquerque, NM.

### **PROJECT PERSONNEL**

In May, Ed Davis rejoined the Mexican Wolf Recovery Program to work for the USFWS as a Mexican Wolf Biologist. Welcome back Ed.

In May, WMAT welcomed a seasonal Tribal Youth Intern to the Program.

### **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.