



Mexican Wolf Recovery Program Monthly Update

March 1- 31, 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 or by visiting the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service website at fws.gov/southwest/es/mexicanwolf. For information on the FAIR, call (928) 338-4385 ext. 226 or visit wmatoutdoor.org. Past updates may be viewed at these websites. Interested parties may [sign up](#) to receive this update electronically by visiting 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.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Mexican Wolf/Livestock Council and Mexican Wolf Middle Management Meetings that were supposed to occur in March have been postponed to a later date that has yet to be determined.

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 March, there were 36 named wolf packs (18 in AZ and 18 in NM) and 8 single collared wolves. There were 98 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 mp1911 and f1823)

In March, mp1911 continued to be documented travelling with f1823 in the east central portion of the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest (ASNF) in Arizona and New Mexico.

Castle Rock Pack (F1686)

In March, the IFT continued to document F1686 traveling with an uncollared wolf in the east central portion of the ASNF. The animals have been documented traveling together long enough to be considered a pack and were named the Castle Rock Pack.

Cerro Trigo Pack (collared f1825)

In March, the Cerro Trigo Pack was located in their territory in the northeastern portion of the ASNF.

Eagle Creek Pack (collared M1477)

In March, 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 March, the Elk Horn Pack was located within their traditional territory in the northeastern portion of the ASNF in Arizona and New Mexico. Subadult f1696 was documented making small dispersal movements away from the pack, but continued to return to its natal territory.

Hoodoo Pack (collared AM1290, AF1333, F1830, m1789, fp1938, and fp1936)

In March, the Hoodoo Pack was located within their traditional territory in the northeastern portion of the ASNF. The IFT initiated hazing efforts in the community of Nutrioso in response to pack locations on private land within the community. The IFT also initiated a diversionary food cache for the Hoodoo Pack in effort to prevent conflict in town.

Owl Canyon Pack (collared m1790 and f1701)

In March, m1790 and f1701 continued to be documented travelling together in the east central portion of the ASNF.

Panther Creek Pack (AM1382, AF1683, and fp1939)

In March, the IFT documented the Panther Creek Pack in their territory in the east central portion of the ASNF. fp1939 has continued to be documented making dispersal movements across the east-central portion of the ASNF, but continued to return to its natal territory.

Prime Canyon Pack (collared AM1471, AF1488, f1791, fp1916, fp1918, fp1919, fp1920, and mp1921)

In March, the IFT documented the Prime Canyon Pack within their territory in the east central portion of the ASNF. The IFT initiated hazing efforts in response to pack locations near the community of Alpine.

Rocky Prairie Pack (collared AM1383 and AF1489)

In March, the IFT documented the Rocky Prairie Pack in the east central portion of the ASNF.

Rose Pack (collared F1959 and m1704)

In March, the IFT documented F1959 and m1704 continuing to travel together in the east central portion of the ASNF and on the SCAR. The IFT initiated hazing efforts on the Rose Pack to mitigate wolf/livestock conflict.

Saffel Pack (collared AM1441, AF1567, fp1844, fp1851, mp1852, and mp1854)

In March, the Saffel Pack was located within their territory in the northeastern portion of the ASNF. AM1441 continued to make broad movements separate from the pack in the eastern portion of the ASNF.

Sierra Blanca Pack (collared AM1571 and AF1550)

In March, the Sierra Blanca Pack was located in their territory in the northeastern portion of the ASNF. AM1571 has been documented making movements outside of the pack's territory and travelling with f1697.

Wolf Mountain Pack (collared f1792)

In March, f1792 and an uncollared male wolf were found dead in Arizona. The incidents are currently under investigation.

Single collared f1697

In March, f1697 (from the Elk Horn Pack) was documented travelling with AM1571 of the Sierra Blanca Pack in the central portion of the ANSF.

ON THE FAIR:

Baldy Pack (collared AM1347 and F1560)

In March, 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 March, 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 March, 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 March, 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 fp1841)

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

Single collared f1828

In March, f1828 was documented traveling in the eastern portion of the FAIR and adjacent

ASNF.

IN NEW MEXICO:

Cimmaron Mesa Pack (collared F1705)

In March, the Cimmaron Mesa Pack was documented traveling in the northwestern portion of the Gila National Forest (GNF).

Colibri Pack (collared AM1555 and mp1856)

In March, 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 mp1855)

In March, the Dark Canyon Pack was documented traveling together within their traditional territory in the west central portion of the GNF.

Datil Mountain Pack (collared F1685)

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

Frieborn Pack (collared AF1443 and M1829)

In March, the Frieborn Pack was documented in the north central portion of the GNF in New Mexico.

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

In March, 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.

Lava Pack (collared AM1285 and AF1405)

In March, the Lava Pack was located within their traditional territory in the southeastern portion of the GNF.

Leon Pack (collared M1824 and F1578)

In March, the Leon Pack was documented within the northwestern portion of the GNF.

Leopold Pack (collared AM1293 and AF1346)

In March, the IFT documented the Leopold Pack within their territory in the northern portion of the Gila Wilderness.

Luna Pack (collared AM1158, AF1487)

In March, the Luna Pack remained in their traditional territory in the north central portion of the GNF. The IFT started and maintained a diversionary food cache for this pack to reduce conflict.

Mangas Pack (collared AM1296, AF1439, M1832, mp1839, fp1840, mp1842, and mp1859)

In March, the Mangas Pack was located within their territory in the northwestern portion of the GNF. mp1839 and fp1840 were lethally removed from this pack to fulfill a removal order that

was issued in March due to repetitive confirmed depredations on livestock. In March, the IFT maintained a diversionary food cache to reduce conflict.

Prieto Pack (collared AF1251, mp1846, and mp1845)

In March, the Prieto Pack was located within their traditional territory in the north-central portion of the GNF. In March, AM1398 (non-functioning radio collar) and one uncollared subadult male were lethally removed from this pack to fulfill two separate removal orders issued due to repetitive confirmed depredations on livestock. In March, mp1845 was found dead in New Mexico, the incident is currently under investigation. In March, the IFT started and maintained two diversionary food caches for this pack to reduce conflict.

San Mateo Pack (collared AF1399 and mp1953)

In March, the San Mateo Pack continued to utilize their territory in the north central portion of the GNF.

Shepherders Baseball Park (SBP) Pack (collared AF1553, f1853, and fp1837)

In March, the SBP Pack was located within their traditional territory in the north central portion of the GNF.

Squirrel Springs Pack (collared AM1349, AF1788, and mp1857)

In March, the Squirrel Springs Pack was located in the north central portion of the GNF.

Wahoo Peak Pack (collared m1717 and f1836)

In March, the Wahoo Peak Pack was located within their territory in the east central portion of the GNF. In early March, the IFT captured, re-collared, and released m1717.

Whiskey Creek Pack (collared M1681)

In March, M1681 continued to travel with an uncollared wolf in the north central portion of the GNF and is now considered the Whiskey Creek Pack.

Whitewater Canyon Pack (collared F1684)

In March, F1684 of the Whitewater Canyon Pack was located in the central portion of the GNF.

Single collared F1702

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

Single collared M1821

In March, M1821 was found dead in New Mexico. The incident is currently under investigation.

Single collared M1693

In March, M1693 was documented making wide dispersal movements across portions of the north-central and central GNF in New Mexico.

Single collared fp1847

In March, fp1847 was documented traveling alone within the south and east central portion of the GNF.

Single collared m1831

In March, Single M1831 (from the Luna Pack) was documented traveling across the north-central portion of the GNF.

Single collared m1838

In March, Single m1838 (from the Luna Pack) was documented traveling across the central portion of the GNF.

Single collared mp1946

In March the IFT captured, collared, and released mp1946 in the northern San Mateo Mountains. This animal had been cross-fostered in Arizona from the Hoodoo pack into the Panther Creek pack in April of 2019 (a wild to wild cross foster).

MORTALITIES

During March the IFT documented the following mortalities in New Mexico: mp1845, M1821, and an uncollared wolf. Also in March, the IFT documented fl792 and an uncollared male wolf associated with the Wolf Mountain pack dead in Arizona. These incidents are all under investigation.

INCIDENTS

During the month of March, there were 24 confirmed wolf depredation incidents on livestock and 4 livestock injured by wolves. There were two nuisance incidents investigated in March. From January 1, 2020 to March 31, 2020, there have been a total of 37 depredation incidents in New Mexico and a total of 4 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 March 1, Wildlife Services investigated a dead calf in Catron County, NM. The investigation determined the cow was a confirmed wolf depredation.

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

On March 3, Wildlife Services investigated an injury on a horse in Catron County, NM. The investigation determined the injury was caused by wolves.

On March 4, Wildlife Services investigated two dead cows in Catron County, NM. The investigation determined both cows were confirmed wolf depredations.

On March 5, Wildlife Services investigated two dead cows and a dead calf in Catron County, NM. The investigation determined all three animals were confirmed wolf depredations.

On March 8, Wildlife Services investigated a dead cow in Catron County, NM. The investigation determined the cow was a confirmed wolf depredation.

On March 9, Wildlife Services investigated a dead cow and dead calf in Catron County, NM. The investigation determined both the cow and calf were confirmed wolf depredations.

On March 13, Wildlife Services investigated a dead cow in Catron County, NM. The investigation determined the cow was a confirmed wolf depredation.

On March 16, Wildlife Services investigated a dead cow in Catron County, NM. The investigation determined the cow was a confirmed wolf depredation.

On March 16, Wildlife Services investigated an injured cow that died from its injuries in Catron County, NM. The investigation determined the cow was a confirmed wolf depredation.

On March 16, the IFT received a report of wolves killing elk in a meadow near a residence outside of Alpine, AZ. The IFT responded that day, removed the elk carcass to National Forest Service land and provided information to the reporting party.

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

On March 18, Wildlife Services investigated a dead calf in Catron County, NM. The investigation determined the calf was a confirmed wolf depredation.

On March 18, the IFT received a report of a dead elk killed by wolves near a residence on private land near Apache Creek, NM. The IFT responded that day and removed the elk to National Forest Service land.

On March 19, Wildlife Services investigated three injured calves in Catron County, NM. The investigation determined the calf injuries were confirmed wolf.

On March 19, Wildlife Services investigated an injured calf that later died from its injuries in Catron County, NM. The investigation determined the calf was a confirmed wolf depredation.

On March 20, Wildlife Services investigated a dead calf and dead cow in Catron County, NM. The investigation determined the calf and cow were both confirmed wolf depredations.

On March 21, Wildlife Services investigated two dead calves in Catron County, NM. The investigation determined both calves were confirmed wolf depredations.

On March 23, Wildlife Services investigated a dead cow and dead calf in Catron County, NM. The investigation determined both the cow and calf were confirmed wolf depredations.

On March 25, Wildlife Services investigated a dead calf in Greenlee County, AZ. The investigation determined the calf was a confirmed wolf depredation.

On March 25, Wildlife Services investigated a dead cow in Catron County, NM. The investigation determined the cow was a confirmed wolf depredation.

COMMUNICATION AND COORDINATION

In March, the IFT implemented the following proactive efforts to reduce livestock depredations: conducted 72 days/nights of hazing effort in areas having recent depredations that resulted in hazing wolves from depredation areas on 27 occasions, removed one carcass from a depredation area and conducted numerous contacts with livestock producers.

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

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.