



Mexican Wolf Recovery Program Monthly Update

May 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 were due by June 15, 2020.

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 May, there were 36 named wolf packs (17 in AZ and 19 in NM) and 8 single collared wolves. There were 95 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 May, 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. The pack continued to show behavior consistent with denning in May.

Castle Rock Pack (F1686)

In May, the Castle Rock Pack was documented in the east central portion of the ASNF. During May, the IFT successfully cross-fostered one wild born neonatal pup from the Rocky Prairie Pack into the Castle Rock den to facilitate a cross-foster of four captive born pups into the Rocky Prairie den. The Castle Rock Pack has continued to exhibit behavior and movements consistent with denning following the cross-foster operation.

Cerro Trigo Pack (collared F1825)

In May, the Cerro Trigo Pack was located in their territory in the northeastern portion of the ASNF. The Cerro Trigo Pack continued to show behavior consistent with denning in May. The

IFT continued to maintain a diversionary food cache for the Cerro Trigo Pack to reduce the potential for depredations on livestock.

Eagle Creek Pack (collared M1477)

In May, 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 May, 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 to make small dispersal movements away from the pack. 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 continued to exhibit behavior and movements consistent with denning during the month of May.

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

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 during the month of May. During the Hoodoo Pack cross-foster event in April, two pups from the Hoodoo Pack (fp1892 and fp1895) were removed from the wild to accommodate the addition of the four captive-born pups. The USFWS transferred the pups to the Sevilleta Wolf Management Facility where they were fostered into a captive litter. For unknown reasons, both the wild pups as well as the captive-born recipient litter (fp1877 and fp1878) died as a result of this foster event. This is the first documented occurrence of this since the Mexican Wolf Recovery Program began its cross-fostering efforts. There have been numerous occurrences of wild pups fostered into a captive litter, where the wild pups were accepted and raised by the captive female.

Panther Creek Pack (AM1382, AF1683, and f1939)

In May, 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, occasionally returning to its natal territory. The pack showed behavior consistent with denning in May.

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

In May, the IFT documented the Prime Canyon Pack within their territory in the east central portion of the ASNF. The Prime Canyon Pack continued to exhibit behavior and movements consistent with denning during the month of May. The IFT continued hazing efforts in the community of Alpine and continued to maintain a food cache as part of the cross-foster effort and to reduce pack locations in the community of Alpine.

Rocky Prairie Pack (collared AM1383 and AF1489)

In May, the IFT documented the Rocky Prairie Pack in the east central portion of the ASNF. The IFT successfully cross-fostered four neonatal pups, born in captivity at the California Wolf

Center, into the Rocky Prairie den in May. The IFT initiated a food cache near the den as part of the cross-foster effort and to reduce potential for livestock depredations. The Rocky Prairie Pack has continued to exhibit behavior and movements consistent with denning following the cross-foster operation.

Rose Pack (collared m1704)

In May, the IFT documented m1704 in the east central portion of the ASNF and on the SCAR.

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

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

Sierra Blanca Pack (collared AM1571 and AF1550)

In May, AF1550 was located in its territory in the northeastern portion of the ASNF. AM1571 continued to make movements outside of the pack's territory and was documented travelling with F1697.

Single collared F1697

In May, F1697 was documented travelling with AM1571 of the Sierra Blanca Pack in the east central portion of the ASNF.

Single collared AM1441

In May, AM1441 was documented making large movements in the northeastern portion of the ASNF.

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.

Maverick Pack (collared AF1291)

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. Additionally, AF1291 was documented making wide dispersals on the FAIR and the eastern portion of the ASNF.

Poker Pack (collared AM1582 and AF1674)

In May, the Poker Pack was documented traveling in the eastern portion of the SCAR and exhibited behavior consistent with denning. At the end of the month, AF1674 and two pups were removed from the SCAR by the USFWS at the request of the San Carlos Apache Tribe to the Ladder Ranch Wolf Management Facility.

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 pack exhibited behavior consistent with denning in May.

Tu dil hil Pack (collared AM1338, AF1679, and f1841)

In May, the Tu dil hil Pack was documented traveling in the eastern portion of the FAIR. The pack exhibited behavior consistent with denning in May.

Single collared F1828

In May, 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 AF1705)

In May, the Cimmaron Mesa Pack was documented traveling in the northwestern portion of the Gila National Forest (GNF). The Cimmaron Mesa Pack no longer displayed behavior consistent with denning by the end of May.

Colibri Pack (collared AM1555 and m1856)

In May, 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. The Colibri Pack displayed behavior consistent with denning in May.

Dark Canyon Pack (collared AM1354, AF1456, and m1855)

In May, the Dark Canyon Pack was documented traveling together within their traditional territory in the west central portion of the GNF. In May, the IFT successfully cross-fostered three neonatal pups, born in captivity at the Endangered Wolf Center in Missouri, into the Dark Canyon Pack. The IFT established a supplemental food cache near the den as a result of the cross-foster and to reduce the potential for conflict with livestock. The Dark Canyon Pack continued to show behavior consistent with denning following the cross-foster.

Datil Mountain Pack (collared F1685)

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

Frieborn Pack (collared AF1443 and M1829)

In May, the Frieborn Pack was documented in the north central portion of the GNF in New Mexico. M1829 was located dead in New Mexico; the incident is under investigation. The pack continued to show behavior consistent with denning in May. A supplementary food cache was initiated by the IFT following the death of AM1829 in May. The food cache will also be maintained to reduce the potential for livestock-related and nuisance conflict.

Iron Creek Pack (collared AM1240, AF1278, F1721, M1710, and F1712)

In May, 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. M1710 continued to show signs of dispersal in May, but continued to return to traditional Iron Creek territory. The IFT successfully cross-fostered two neonatal pups, born in captivity at the Phoenix Zoo, into the Iron Creek Pack. The pack continued to show behavior consistent with denning following the cross-

foster. F1712, a wolf cross-fostered from captivity into the Iron Creek Pack in 2018, was also documented showing behavior consistent with denning in May. The IFT initiated a supplemental food cache near F1712 in effort to document uncollared wolves with F1712 and to reduce the potential for livestock-related conflict.

Lava Pack (collared AM1285 and AF1405)

In May, the Lava Pack was located within their traditional territory in the southeastern portion of the GNF. The pack continued to demonstrate behavior consistent with denning during the month of May.

Leon Pack (collared M1824 and F1578)

In May, the Leon Pack was documented within their territory in northwestern portion of the GNF, and continued to demonstrate behavior consistent with denning.

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 displayed behavior consistent with denning in May.

Luna Pack (collared AM1158, AF1487)

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

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

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 to reduce conflict. The pack demonstrated behavior consistent with denning in May.

Owl Canyon Pack (collared m1790 and f1701)

In May, m1790 and f1701 displayed denning behavior and were documented travelling together in the western portion of the GNF. The Owl Canyon Pack no longer displayed behavior consistent with denning by the end of May.

Prieto Pack (collared m1846, and m1875)

In May, m1875, believed to be a member of the Prieto Pack, (pending genetic results) was located within the traditional Prieto Pack territory in the north-central portion of the GNF. Prieto m1846 displayed large dispersal behavior across the north-central and central portion of the GNF.

San Mateo Pack (collared AF1399 and m1953)

In May, the San Mateo Pack continued to utilize their territory in the north central portion of the GNF. During May, the IFT successfully cross-fostered three neonatal pups, born in captivity at the Endangered Wolf Center in Missouri, into the San Mateo 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 San Mateo Pack has continued to exhibit behavior and movements consistent with denning following the cross-foster operation.

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

In May, the SBP Pack was located within their traditional territory in the north central portion of the GNF. Both AF1553 and F1853 continued to show behavior consistent with denning in separate portions of SBP's traditional territory in May. The IFT maintained a diversionary food cache associated with F1853 to prevent depredations.

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

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

Wahoo Peak Pack (collared m1717 and f1836)

In May, the Wahoo Peak Pack continued travelling separately within their territory in the east central portion of the GNF and within the Cibola National Forest (CNF). The male, 1717, was documented traveling with an uncollared wolf in the CNF during May, and will now be considered a member of a new pair.

Whiskey Creek Pack (collared M1681)

In May, the Whiskey Creek Pack was located within their territory in the north central portion of the GNF and continued to show behavior consistent with denning. The IFT established a diversionary food cache for the Whiskey Creek in an effort to reduce the potential for conflicts with livestock.

Whitewater Canyon Pack (collared F1684)

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

Single collared F1702

In May, F1702 was located dead in New Mexico; the incident is under investigation.

Single collared M1693

In May, M1693 was documented making wide dispersal movements across portions of the south central GNF in New Mexico.

Single collared F1847

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

Single collared M1831

In May, M1831 was documented traveling across the north-central portion of the GNF in NM.

Single collared M1838

In May, M1838 was documented traveling across the central portion of the GNF.

Single collared m1946

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

MORTALITIES

In May, the IFT documented F1702 (Single) and M1829 (of the Frieborn Pack) dead in New Mexico. Both incidents are under investigation. From January 1 to May 31, 2020, the IFT has documented 12 wolf mortalities.

INCIDENTS

During the month of May, there were 15 confirmed wolf depredation incidents on livestock, no probable wolf depredation on livestock and one livestock injured by wolves. There were three nuisance incidents investigated in May. From January 1, 2020 to May 31, 2020, there have been a total of 60 depredation incidents in New Mexico and a total of 21 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 May 2, Wildlife Services investigated a dead cow in Apache County, AZ. The investigation determined the cow was a confirmed wolf depredation.

On May 8, Wildlife Services investigated a dead calf in Catron County, NM. The Investigation determined the calf was a confirmed wolf depredation.

On May 9, the IFT responded to a report of wolves in close proximity to cattle on private land pasture in the community of Alpine. The IFT responded and hazed AM1571, F1697 and an uncollared wolf away from town. On May 13, the IFT received a report of an uncollared wolf chasing cattle on private land pasture in Alpine. The IFT responded immediately and did not locate any wolves in the area. In response to these incidents, the IFT initiated nightly hazing efforts for the duration of the month, which resulted in locating and hazing wolves from locations on the edge of Alpine on two occasions. The IFT contacted a number of Alpine residents in May to provide information, resources to opportunistically harass wolves in Alpine and in effort to obtain timely reports of wolves observed in the community.

On May 11, Wildlife Services investigated a dead cow in Catron County, NM. The investigation determined the cow was a confirmed wolf depredation.

On May 11, Wildlife Services investigated two dead calves in Apache County, AZ. The investigations determined both calves were confirmed wolf depredations.

On May 18, Wildlife Services investigated a dead calf in Greenlee County, AZ. The investigation determined the calf was a confirmed wolf depredation.

On May 18, Wildlife Services investigated an injured yearling in Catron County, NM. The investigation determined that the injury was caused by wolves.

On May 19, Wildlife Services investigated a dead calf and a dead cow in Catron County, NM. The investigations determined both the calf and cow were confirmed wolf depredations.

On May 19, the IFT received a report of a homeowner in Nutrioso who reported finding the carcass of a bull elk near their residence believed to have been killed by wolves on the night of 5/16/20. The homeowner stated they were concerned for the welfare of their horses. The IFT conducted a sight visit, met with the homeowner and provided information and resources to opportunistically harass any wolves observed near human dwellings or livestock. GPS collar locations for Elk Horn AF1294 and F1696 indicated the animals were likely involved in the predation of the bull elk.

On May 21, Wildlife Services investigated a dead cow in Greenlee County, AZ. The investigation determined the cow was a confirmed wolf depredation.

On May 27, Wildlife Services investigated two dead calves in Apache County, AZ. The investigations determined both calves were confirmed wolf depredations.

On May 28, Wildlife Services investigated a dead calf in Apache County, AZ. The investigation determined the calf was a confirmed wolf depredation.

On May 30, Wildlife Services investigated an injured calf that had to be put down, in Apache County, AZ. The investigation determined the calf was a confirmed wolf depredation.

On May 31, Wildlife Services investigated two dead cows in Apache County, AZ. The investigations determined both cows were confirmed wolf depredations.

COMMUNICATION AND COORDINATION

In May, the IFT implemented the following proactive efforts to reduce livestock depredations: conducted 33 days/nights of hazing effort in areas having recent depredations that resulted in hazing wolves from depredation areas on eight occasions, removed one carcass from a depredation area, maintained 12 diversionary food caches, and conducted frequent telephonic contacts with livestock producers in depredation areas.

Throughout the month of May 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

In May, Jake Ure started work for the Program as a non-lethal specialist with the USDA Wildlife

Services in AZ.

In May, Don Young started employment as the Field Team Leader for the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish. Don conducted research and managed wolves with the US Fish and Wildlife Service and Alaska Department of Fish and Game in Alaska for 28 years. He will be based out of Quemado, NM.

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.