



# Mexican Wolf Blue Range Reintroduction Project Fact Sheet

## Southwest Region

### Background

On March 29, 1998, 11 Mexican wolves were released into the Blue Range Wolf Recovery Area (BRWRA) on the Apache National Forest in eastern Arizona. Subsequent releases and translocations of Mexican wolves have continued to occur. Wolves are released into the primary recovery zone and are allowed to disperse into the secondary recovery zone. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Arizona Game and Fish Department, New Mexico Department of Game and Fish, USDA-APHIS Wildlife Services, USDA Forest Service, and White Mountain Apache Tribe have formed an Interagency Field Team (IFT) to manage the free-ranging population. Mexican wolves are protected under the Endangered Species Act and are designated as a “nonessential experimental” population which allows for greater management flexibility to address wolf conflict situations such as livestock depredations and nuisance behavior.

### Adult Wolf Description:

- Richly colored coat of buff, gray, rust, and black.
- About 5 ½ feet in total length (German shepherd size) and weighs 50-80 lbs.
- For comparison, a coyote is about 4 feet in total length and weighs 25-35 lbs.

### Key Rules:

Mexican wolves are protected under a special federal regulation, the Mexican Wolf Experimental Population Final Rule, whereby specific management rules apply within the Experimental Population Area, which includes areas south of I-40 and north of I-10 in Arizona and New Mexico. No private, tribal, or public land use restrictions are imposed, except for limited temporary closures on public land only, that may be established within a 1-mile radius of occupied release pens, active dens, and rendezvous sites in the Apache or Gila National Forests.

### You May Legally:

- Harass a wolf away from you or your property without injuring it, but you must report it within 7 days.
- Kill or injure a wolf that is in the act of killing, wounding, or biting cattle, sheep, horses, mules, or burros on your **private** or **tribal** land, but you must report it within 24 hours.
- Kill, injure, or harass a wolf in defense of human life, but you must report it within 24 hours.

### You May Not Legally:

- Kill or injure a wolf just because it is near you or your property.
- Kill or injure a wolf that attacks your pet (including working and hunting dogs), regardless of land ownership (private, public, tribal).

- Kill or injure a wolf that is in the act of killing, wounding, or biting your cattle, sheep, horses, mules, or burros on **public** land without a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service permit.
- Kill or injure a wolf that is feeding on a livestock carcass (you cannot assume the wolf killed it because wolves will feed on carrion).
- Violate official closures around occupied release pens, active dens, and rendezvous sites.
- Shoot a wolf because you thought it was a coyote or something else (you are responsible for identifying your target before shooting).
- Attempt to do any of the above actions or solicit someone else to do them.

Violations of the above rules may be subject to prosecution. Criminal penalties may include imprisonment of not more than one year, and a fine of up to \$50,000 and/or a civil penalty of up to \$25,000. You will not be prosecuted for unavoidably killing or injuring a wolf, such as striking a wolf with your vehicle, but you must report it within 24 hours. Call the Interagency Field Team at 1-888/459-9653 or the Arizona Game and Fish Department’s 24-hour dispatch at 1-800/352-0700 to make any of the required reports discussed above regarding harassment or take (kill or injure) of wolves, or to report wolf sightings, encounters, or suspected livestock depredations. For more information about the Mexican wolf program, please see the contact information provided on the back.



*Mexican wolf*  
Jeff Robbins,  
Associated Press

*Coyote*  
Kim Smith-Dodson



# Dealing With Wolf Depredation

## What to Do...

If you suspect a Mexican wolf has killed or injured your pet or livestock (cattle, sheep, horse, mule, or burro):

### Report It

Call the Mexican Wolf Interagency Field Team at 928/339-4329 or toll free at 1-888/459-9653, or the Arizona Game and Fish Department's 24-hour dispatch at 1-800/352-0070. Please leave a message with your name and telephone number so that someone can get back to you. These numbers are checked frequently and appropriate agency representatives will be contacted. You may also contact your local Wildlife Services Specialist. Wildlife Services is the lead agency within the Interagency Field Team responsible for investigating wolf depredations. You may be entitled to compensation for confirmed and probable Mexican wolf depredations though Defenders of Wildlife. For information regarding this private compensation program, contact: Craig Miller, Defenders of Wildlife Southwest Regional Office, 302 S. Convent Ave, Tucson, Arizona 85701. Telephone: 520/623-9653. E-mail: [cmiller@defenders.org](mailto:cmiller@defenders.org).

### Protect the Evidence

- **Keep bystanders, pets, and livestock away from the area.** Vital evidence can be ruined by people walking around or moving the carcass.
- **Cover the livestock carcass or remains with a tarp and weight it securely.** This will keep other predators or scavengers from destroying evidence or disturbing any signs of hemorrhaging commonly caused by wolf depredations. Use care to avoid stepping on tracks or harming other evidence.

## What to Do...

If you see a wolf on your property:

### Protect Your Interests

Even if the wolf is not harming livestock, report its presence to the Interagency Field Team at 928/339-4329 or toll free at 1-888/459-9653. Later, if your livestock are attacked, or if you kill a wolf in the act of attacking your livestock, there will be a record that you previously reported a wolf on or near your property.

Wolves within the Mexican Wolf Experimental Population Area (which includes the area of Arizona and New Mexico south of I-40 and north of I-10), may be harassed by anyone in a non-injurious and opportunistic manner if the wolf presents itself. Under the law, this is limited to discharging firearms in proximity to but not in the direction of wolves; throwing objects in the general direction of but not at wolves; or making loud noises to frighten the wolf away from you or your property. You may not track, attract, search out, or chase a wolf and then harass it. Any harassment must not cause bodily injury or death. If you harass a wolf you must report it to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service within 7 days. It is not advisable to wound or kill a Mexican wolf unless it is threatening a human life. Threatening behavior by a Mexican wolf is considered very unlikely based on decades of experience with gray wolves elsewhere.

You may legally wound or kill a wolf on your **private or tribal** land if the wolf is in the act of attacking your livestock. Under the law this means "*to be engaged in the pursuit and grasping, biting, attacking, wounding, or feeding upon livestock that are alive.*" If you wound or kill a wolf for any reason, you must report it within 24 hours.

Unless you have a permit issued by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, you may not legally wound or kill depredating wolves on **public** land grazing allotments. If you experience depredation on public land, contact the Interagency Field Team at 1-888/459-9653. After repeated depredations by Mexican wolves on public land are confirmed, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service may issue a permit to a livestock owner to kill wolves engaged in the act of depredating. These wolf control permits can be issued only after six or more breeding pairs exist within the Blue Range Wolf Recovery Area.

Should you see a wolf feeding on dead livestock, do not shoot it. If wolves are observed feeding on a carcass, you cannot assume that wolves killed the animal because livestock can die from many causes and wolves will feed on the carrion. Protect the evidence and call the Interagency Field Team.

Contact the Interagency Field Team if you suspect a wolf den or wolf "rendezvous site" (a regular gathering area for packs with young pups) is on your private property or your public land grazing allotment, to determine what actions are appropriate.

## What to Do...

If you kill or injure a Mexican wolf:

### Protect Yourself

Call the Interagency Field Team at 928/339-4329 or 1-888/459-9653 immediately. Do not remove the wolf or the livestock. Any injured or dead Mexican wolf is considered a potential crime scene. A law enforcement investigation will be conducted to ensure that the wolf was actually threatening human safety or was engaged in the act of killing, wounding, or biting your livestock. Preservation of the evidence is therefore crucial. If no such evidence exists, you may be at risk for a criminal fine of up to \$50,000 and up to one year imprisonment and/or a civil penalty of up to \$25,000.

*Thank you for your cooperation.*

### For More Information Contact:

- Mexican Wolf Interagency Field Team: 928/339-4329 or toll free at 1-888/459-9653
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service 505/346-2525
- Arizona Game and Fish Department 928/367-4281
- New Mexico Department of Game and Fish 505/476-8101
- Fort Apache Indian Reservation 928/338-4385
- Wildlife Services 866/487-3297
- <http://mexicanwolf.fws.gov>
- <http://azgfd.gov/wolf>

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