

Recovery of the Mexican Wolf

Fact Sheet

- Mexican gray wolves, or “lobos”, are the epitome of wildness in the Southwest and the most endangered mammal in North America.
- Federal predator control programs wiped them out completely in the wild in the 1900s, but they were spared from extinction by an emergency captive breeding program begun in the late 1970s.
- Only 7 Mexican gray wolves survived the extermination campaign. Through a science-based breeding program, a genetically viable population of over 300 lobos lives in 46 captive holding facilities in the U. S. and Mexico today. These animals are the source stock for reintroduction projects.
- Mexican gray wolves are protected as an endangered species by the Endangered Species Act; and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) is charged with their restoration and recovery.
- In 2007 alone, the USFWS killed or removed 20 wolves, causing the wild population to decline by 12 percent, the third decline in 4 years.
- The yearly population declines reflect rigid and punitive management procedures, which require killing or permanently removing wolves that conflict with livestock, regardless of the consequences for wolf recovery.
- With just 23 Mexican gray wolves remaining in New Mexico, we need to take immediate action to ensure the wolves’ success in the Southwest.
- The USFWS has a legal and moral responsibility to make immediate and drastic changes in management to prevent the second extinction of lobos in the wild.
- Given their perilously low numbers, killing and removing wolves can no longer be the primary tools used by government officials to address conflicts with livestock. We need to creatively solve these problems, not just react to them, and protect wolves to ensure their recovery in our wild lands.
- The USFWS must use its authority to protect Mexican wolves by placing a moratorium on the killing and removal of wolves until the population rebounds to a minimum benchmark of at least 102 wolves and 18 breeding pairs, as recommended by the American Society of Mammalogists.
- Southwest forests evolved with both Mexican gray wolves, elk, and deer and the return of lobos will help restore a balance to the wild.
- By working together, we can ensure wolves are able to expand and fill their former range, restoring a balance to natural areas in the Southwest.

If you have any questions, contact Nathan Newcomer of the
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