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Contacts: Michael Robinson, Center for Biological Diversity, (575) 534-0360
Greta Anderson, Western Watersheds Project, (520) 623-1878
Brian Vincent, Big Wildlife, (604) 618-1030

**Conservationists Request Feds Replace Photo of Wolf 'Poster Wolf'
Was One of 18 Rare Mexican Wolves Killed Through Capture;
Altogether, More Than 2,900 Gray Wolves Killed**

SILVER CITY, N.M.— Sixteen conservation and animal welfare organizations today asked the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to replace the photograph of the “poster wolf” of the Mexican gray wolf program – prominently displayed on the federal agency’s website, <http://www.fws.gov/southwest/es/mexicanwolf/>, and in a oversized blowup poster at the agency’s Washington, D.C., headquarters – because the wolf was trapped and inadvertently killed in 2005. (Click [here](#) to read letter to the Fish and Wildlife Service).

The wolf was one of at least 2,911 gray wolves killed as a result of Fish and Wildlife Service actions since 1996, most in the northern Rocky Mountains and upper Midwest, but also including 29 highly imperiled Mexican gray wolves in the Southwest (*see charts, below*).

This month, the federal government shot all 27 members of the Hog Heaven pack in Montana, the seventh wolf pack in the state wiped out in its entirety this year.



“Brunhilda,” alpha female of the Francisco Pack of Mexican gray wolves. Photo by George Andrejko.

The killings in the northern Rockies have rendered wolves in Yellowstone National Park almost entirely genetically isolated, threatening their viability and preventing the northern Rockies wolves’ recovery.

There are now only about 50 Mexican wolves in the wild – a population that scientists

say is already undergoing debilitating inbreeding depression.

The “poster wolf,” alpha female number 511 – also known as Brunhilda, named for the figure in Norse mythology because of her large size as a pup – died of “capture myopathy” (stress and overheating) on July 21, 2005, three and a half weeks after she was trapped and taken into captivity.

Brunhilda was one of the original 11 Mexican wolves released in March 1998, and the last to roam freely from among those 11.

The photo taken by Arizona Department of Game and Fish photographer George Andrejko of Brunhilda stepping out of a pen into freedom won the department an award and was made famous as a poster. The photo also adorns the Forest Service's map of the Blue Range of Arizona, where she was first released.

"The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has a responsibility to accurately portray its management of the Mexican gray wolf," said Michael Robinson, conservation advocate with the Center for Biological Diversity. “The agency’s heavy-handed tactics have resulted in dozens of Mexican gray wolf deaths and a struggling population.”.

Brunhilda was one of 18 Mexican wolves – the tally so far – killed inadvertently as a result of capture (*see list, below*). The government has shot an additional 11 wolves, and 22 have been consigned to permanent captivity. Brunhilda’s mate is one of two wolves whose legs were amputated as a result of trap injuries. One of their litters of five wild-conceived pups died from stress from the noise of a construction project near their pen, in June 2003, as a result of an earlier bout in captivity.

Brunhilda was trapped from the wild three times for having left the arbitrary bounds of the Mexican wolf recovery area, and once later for preying on cattle after first having scavenged on the carcasses of cattle she had not killed. Both reasons to trap her would have been prevented if the Fish and Wildlife Service had followed scientists’ longstanding recommendations and reformed ill-conceived policies of the reintroduction program.

“The Fish and Wildlife Service originally exterminated the gray wolf from the western United States on behalf of the livestock industry,” Robinson said, “and the Bush administration has led the agency back to its bad old days.”

“It’s appalling, really,” said Greta Anderson, Arizona director of Western Watersheds Project. “The Fish and Wildlife Service should be managing these wolves as something more than majestic poster children . They should be working to keep them alive and in the wild.”

“What we are seeing now is wolf 'management' through the barrel of a bazooka,” said Brian Vincent, of Big Wildlife.

The Mexican wolf reintroduction program in New Mexico and Arizona began in 1998. The wolves were projected to reach 102 animals, including 18 breeding pairs, by the end of 2006 and to continue increasing from there. The actual numbers for the end of 2007 were 52 wolves, including just three breeding pairs. The 2008 count will take place in January.

Wolf ID / Pack	Death Date	Cause or Circumstances of Death
m623 / Pipestem	8/24/1999	capture stress-induced disease
f625 / Pipestem	8/30/1999	capture stress-induced disease
m626 / Pipestem	8/30/1999	capture stress-induced disease
M580 / Wildcat	11/9/2001	hyperthermia from helicopter pursuit
AF592 / Sycamore	5/27/2003	shot by Fish and Wildlife Service
??827 / Francisco	6/10/2003	stress from construction activities near pen
??828 / Francisco	6/10/2003	stress from construction activities near pen
??829 / Francisco	6/10/2003	stress from construction activities near pen
??830 / Francisco	6/10/2003	stress from construction activities near pen
??831 / Francisco	6/10/2003	stress from construction activities near pen
AM574 / Saddle	7/11/2004	shot by USDA Wildlife Services
AM729 / Ring	6/26/2005	shot by USDA Wildlife Services
AF511 / Francisco	7/21/2005	capture myopathy
m1018 / Hon-Dah	4/26/2006	capture myopathy
f1020 / Hon-Dah	5/20/2006	captured pup placed with & killed by unrelated wolf
f1021 / Hon-Dah	5/20/2006	captured pup placed with & killed by unrelated wolf
m1022 / Hon-Dah	5/20/2006	captured pup placed with & killed by unrelated wolf

m1023 / Hon-Dah **5/20/2006** captured pup placed with & killed by unrelated wolf
m1024 / Hon-Dah **5/20/2006** captured pup placed with & killed by unrelated wolf
m1025 / Hon-Dah **5/20/2006** captured pup placed with & killed by unrelated wolf
AF1027 / Hon-Dah **5/22/2006** capture myopathy
AM578 / Hon-Dah **5/24/2006** shot by USDA Wildlife Services
M864 / lone wolf **5/28/2006** shot by USDA Wildlife Services
AM993 / Nantac **6/18/2006** shot by USDA Wildlife Services
AF873 / Nantac **7/6/2006** shot by USDA Wildlife Services
M859 / lone wolf **11/22/2006** shot by USDA Wildlife Services
AM796 / San Mateo **2/20/2007** shot by USDA Wildlife Services
m1007 / Saddle **3/16/2007** shot by USDA Wildlife Services
AF924 / Durango **7/5/2007** shot by USDA Wildlife Services

KEY m = male pup or subadult (18 months or younger) f = female pup or subadult (18 months or younger) M = adult male F = adult female AM = alpha male AF = alpha female ?? = pup of unknown sex (dead and consumed by packmates before sex ascertained) capture myopathy = a disease complex associated with capture or handling of any wild mammal or bird, characterized by hyperthermia and occurring when an animal is unable to cool itself from overexertion, drugs, a heavy coat, reduced blood flow or high environmental temperatures.

NORTHERN GRAY WOLVES KILLED BY GOVERNMENT (1996-present)

	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003	2002	2001	2000	1999	1998	1997	1996
MT	88	73	15	2	1	14	9	5	4	9	4	14	4
ID	87	50	71	41	30	7	14	5	10	5	0	1	1
WY	38	63	56	61	55	38	23	8	6	9	3	6	1
MN	no data	121	133	150	103	124	152	105	149	157	168	212	134
MI	9	12	6	28	23	19	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
WI	2	32	18	47	29	18	0	0	0	0	0	0	0