



United States Department of the Interior



FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Mexican Wolf Recovery Program
2105 Osuna NE
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87113

08/04/2026

Memorandum

To: [REDACTED], U.S. Department of Agriculture Animal Plant and Health
Inspection Service - Wildlife Services

From: Mexican Wolf Recovery Coordinator, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Southwest
Region **BRADY MCGEE** Digitally signed by BRADY MCGEE
Date: 2026.08.04 13:08:55 -06'00'

CC: Field Coordinator, Mexican Wolf Recovery Program U.S. Fish and Wildlife
Service, Southwest Region

Subject: Mexican Wolf Decision Memorandum, [REDACTED]

Purpose

The purpose of this memorandum is to authorize a control action to address chronic livestock depredations in an area in [REDACTED], hereafter referred to as the depredation area (see Figure 1). This memorandum authorizes personnel from USDA-APHIS Wildlife Services to trap for removal to captivity or lethally remove one Mexican wolf from the depredation area, provided that wolf is either an uncollared wolf or [REDACTED]. If [REDACTED] or an uncollared wolf is captured, the wolf will be placed in captivity with the intent to translocate it to the wild in Mexico. If a collared wolf other than [REDACTED] is captured, the wolf will be released on Federal land within its home range.

For any wolf captured in a trap, contact one of the following [REDACTED] or United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) personnel to either release the animal on Federal land within its home range (if collared wolf other than [REDACTED]) or remove the wolf to captivity ([REDACTED] or any uncollared wolf):

- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- Lauren Toivonen (505-546-2599)

We are only authorizing live or lethal removal of one wolf at this time. This memorandum will be considered fulfilled and authorized activities will cease once one wolf is removed from the area.

Background

Under the regulations for the nonessential experimental population of the Mexican wolf (*Canis lupus baileyi*, 50 CFR 17.84(k)) and the USFWS Mexican Wolf Recovery Program recovery permit (ESPER0048320), the USFWS or designated agency may intentionally harass, implement non-lethal control measures, translocate, place in captivity, or lethally control problem wolves.

It is the USFWS's intent to recover the Mexican wolf in a manner that reduces economic impacts on the local livestock industry. Depredations and injuries attributed to collared and uncollared wolves continued to occur within the depredation area throughout March-July 2026 despite ongoing efforts from the Interagency Field Team (IFT) to deter depredations.

Definitions

Problem wolves mean Mexican wolves that, for purposes of management and control by the USFWS or its designated agent(s), are (A) individuals or members of a group or pack (including adults, yearlings, and pups greater than 4 months of age) that were involved in a depredation on lawfully present domestic animals; (B) habituated to humans, human residences, or other facilities regularly occupied by humans; or (C) aggressive when unprovoked toward humans.

A *depredation* is defined as a confirmed killing or wounding of lawfully present domestic animals by one or more Mexican wolves.

A single *depredation incident* is defined as the aggregate number of livestock confirmed to be killed or mortally wounded by an individual wolf or by a single pack of wolves at a single location within a 24-hour period. Depredation incidents do not include confirmed depredations where the injured animal survives.

Current Conditions

Three confirmed depredation death incidents, two pending depredation death incidents, eleven confirmed depredation injuries, and one probable wolf caused-depredation death of lawfully present livestock occurred in the depredation area from March 13, 2026, to July 28, 2026 (see chronology below and Figure 1). These depredations have been associated with uncollared wolves and [REDACTED]. [REDACTED]

Chronology of Recent Events Prompting Management Decision (see attached Figure 1)

3/13/2026: Depredation (death) of a lawfully present calf on Federal land – confirmed wolf. Assigned to [REDACTED].

3/14/2026: Depredation (injury) of a lawfully present calf on Federal land – confirmed wolf. Assigned to [REDACTED].

3/15/2026: Depredation (injury) of a lawfully present calf on Federal land – confirmed wolf. Assigned to [REDACTED].

3/27/2026: Two depredations (injuries) of lawfully present calves on Federal land – confirmed wolf. Both were assigned to uncollared.

3/28/2026: Two depredations (injuries) of lawfully present calves on Federal land – confirmed wolf. Both were assigned to uncollared.

4/11/2026: Two depredations (injuries) of lawfully present calves on Federal land – confirmed wolf. One injury was assigned to the [REDACTED], and one was assigned to uncollared.

4/11/2026: Probable depredation (death) of a lawfully present calf on Federal land – confirmed wolf. Assigned to uncollared.

4/18/2026: Depredation (death) of a lawfully present calf on Federal land – confirmed wolf. Assigned to uncollared.

5/14/2026: Depredation (injury) of a lawfully present calf on Private land – confirmed wolf. Assigned to [REDACTED].

6/27/2026: Two depredations (injuries) of lawfully present calves on Federal land – confirmed wolf. One injury was assigned to the [REDACTED], and one was assigned to uncollared.

7/16/2026: Depredation (death) of a lawfully present cow on Private land – confirmed wolf. Assigned to uncollared.

7/24/2026: Pending depredation (death) of a lawfully present cow on Federal land – recommended confirmed wolf. Assignment pending ([REDACTED] in area).

7/28/2026: Pending depredation (death) of a lawfully present cow on Federal land – recommended confirmed wolf. Assignment pending ([REDACTED] in area).

Management Actions Conducted to Deter/Reduce Conflict

The ranchers/permittees and IFT have taken a variety of preventative measures to avoid additional depredations, including but not limited to:

- Range riding began in mid-March 2026 and continued through present.
- The IFT established four diversionary food caches throughout this area. Two food caches were established in mid-March, the third food cache was established in early April, and the fourth food cache was established in mid-April. None was successful with drawing in wolves and were discontinued due to wolves moving to higher elevation areas.
- The IFT established a fifth food cache specifically targeting the [REDACTED] on April 3, 2026. The intent was to prevent the [REDACTED] from depredating. The [REDACTED] found and utilized this food cache but has been involved in additional depredations since the food cache was established.
- The producers moved cattle from the pasture where depredations occurred and are continuously and actively monitoring their livestock, but depredations have continued to occur in a wide area.
- The Service issued a removal order in the area ([REDACTED]) but efforts were unsuccessful at trapping and removing a wolf.

Despite persistent management actions, the depredation area experiences continued wolf-caused depredations to livestock year after year. Hazing has proven largely ineffective due to the extremely rugged terrain of the depredation area. The steep ridges and deep canyons make hiking and/or horseback hazing impractical and resource-intensive, and past attempts have shown little success.

Considerations

I make my decision fully considering the following:

1. Evidence in the USFWS's files show that Mexican wolves have caused the death and injury of the aforementioned domestic animals.

2. Given the rate and proximity of the depredations, the USFWS believes it is likely that Mexican wolves will continue to depredate on domestic animals in the near future without additional control measures.
3. We have considered evidence of the use of attractants or intentional feeding of Mexican wolves in the area. There is no evidence to suggest the intentional use of attractants or feeding to draw wolves into the area has occurred.
4. The basis of the control action is livestock depredations, and thus, we have not considered evidence related to wolf/human interactions.

Decision

Given the chronic depredations and injuries, I am authorizing the removal of one wolf from the depredation area through either lethal control or placement into captivity, provided that the wolf is either uncollared or [REDACTED] USDA–APHIS Wildlife Services is authorized to conduct activities in accordance with this memo from August 4, 2026, through September 4, 2026. Authorized activities will cease when one wolf is removed from the area.

Authorities

The USFWS Mexican Wolf Recovery Program recovery permit (ESPER0048320), issued September 4, 2024, under 50 CFR 17.22 and 50 CFR 17.32, provides that Authorized Permittees may take any Mexican wolf in a manner consistent with a USFWS-approved management plan or species management measure the USFWS adopted pursuant to the provisions of 50 CFR 17.84(k), as well as to conduct activities related directly to Mexican wolf reintroduced, non-essential experimental population conservation, protection, and recovery in Arizona and New Mexico. The permit's provision R(l) provides that, "Specifically, authorization includes all actions related to: capture including, but not limited to, leg-hold traps, helicopter or ground darting and net-gunning, and captive capture methods; handling; possessing; administering health care; propagating; radio collaring, or other marking techniques; releasing, translocating, and cross-fostering; obtaining and preserving blood, tissue, fur, semen, oocytes, and other samples that are considered parts of Mexican wolves (scat is not considered a part of a Mexican wolf and can be collected without a permit); transporting between approved Mexican wolf captive management facilities in the United States and Mexico, to and from veterinarian care facilities, and to approved release sites; purposeful lethal take (purposeful lethal take is limited to Mexican wolves within the MWEPA in Arizona and New Mexico); hazing via less-than-lethal projectiles; injurious harassment; investigating known wolf GPS radio collar clusters indicative of den, rendezvous or kill sites; research; and carrying out any other USFWS-approved husbandry practice, law enforcement, or management action for Mexican wolves."

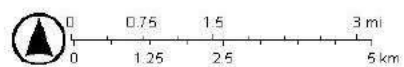
The regulations for the nonessential experimental population of Mexican wolves at 50 CFR 17.84(k)(7)(vii) states that the USFWS or a designated agency may take any Mexican wolf in the experimental population in a manner consistent with a USFWS-approved management plan, special management measure, biological opinion pursuant to section 7(a)(2) of the Act, section 6 of the Act as described in §17.31 for State game and fish agencies with authority to manage Mexican wolves, or a valid permit issued by the Service through §17.32."

Thus, USDA–APHIS Wildlife Services employees are authorized to translocate live Mexican wolves for placement in captivity in accordance with this Decision Memorandum, and any incidental wolf death or injury during this operation will be covered under Permit ESPER0048320. The USDA–APHIS Wildlife Services employees working under this permit will not be considered negligent when exercising appropriate methodology. Appropriate

methodology is defined as USDA–APHIS Wildlife Services employees following all established policies and Standard Operating Procedures associated with Mexican wolf recovery.



- Depredations
- National Forest
- Private Land



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, (c)
OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community
Esri, NASA, NOAA, USGS, FEMA