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Injured Mexican wolf dies on way to veterinarian

PHOENIX – Arizona Game and Fish Department personnel on the Mexican Wolf Interagency Field Team (IFT) were contacted on Nov. 23 by a member of the public who reported seeing an injured Mexican wolf in the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests near Big Lake. The IFT located and observed the wolf the next day by tracking its radio collar signal. After confirming the wolf was injured, the IFT initiated efforts to capture the animal and evaluate its injury.

On Dec. 3, the IFT captured the wolf and identified it as mp1242, a young male that was born earlier this year into the Bluestem pack. IFT members found that mp1242 had an injured rear leg and was in poor body condition.

In phone consultation with a veterinarian, Game and Fish personnel attempted to implement life saving measures en route to the vet's office, but the wolf died of its injuries.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) law enforcement agents have opened an investigation, and the carcass has been sent to the National Fish and Wildlife Forensics Laboratory in Ashland, Ore., for necropsy.

The Bluestem pack includes two adults (the breeding pair) and, until this death, possibly three or more pups that were born this year. Two pups from the pack were radio collared earlier this summer.

Mexican wolf reintroduction is a joint effort by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Arizona Game and Fish Department, White Mountain Apache Tribe, USDA Forest Service, USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service - Wildlife Services, and other stakeholders. The Fort Apache Indian Reservation also plays an integral part in the reintroduction effort.