

Mexican Gray Wolf

New rule available January 2021: www.wildlife.state.nm.us/home/publications

Wolves Are a Federally Protected Species

The Mexican Wolf Experimental Population Area includes portions of New Mexico. Wolves are protected by the federal Endangered Species Act and by the New Mexico Wildlife Conservation Act. Federal penalties for shooting a wolf can include a year in jail and a \$50,000 fine with additional New Mexico state penalties for violating the Wildlife Conservation Act .

Rewards up to \$45,000 for information leading to arrest and prosecution of wolf poachers are offered by federal and state agencies and conservation organizations jointly.

It is illegal to:

- Kill or injure a wolf because it is near you or your property.
- Kill or injure a wolf if it attacks your pet.
- Kill or injure a wolf feeding on dead livestock.
- Enter posted closures around release pens, active dens and rendezvous sites.
- Shoot a wolf because of mistakenly identifying it as a coyote or anything else (page 118).

However, it is legal to kill, injure or harass a wolf if:

- The wolf is in the act of killing, wounding or biting cattle, sheep, horses, mules or burros owned by you and which are on private or tribal land.
- Acting in defense of human life.

Any person taking such action **must report the incident within 24 hours** to the Mexican Wolf Interagency Field Office: **1-888-459-9653** or the NMDGF 24-hour dispatch telephone: **1-800-432-4263**. For more information about Mexican wolves and the USFWS Wolf Recovery Program, visit: www.fws.gov/southwest/es/mexicanwolf/.

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General information: **1-888-248-6866** Operation Game Thief: **1-800-432-4263**

Wolf Encounters and Identification

The Gila National Forest and surrounding areas are locations where wolf encounters may occur. Mexican gray wolves typically weigh between 50–80 pounds, stand 28–32 inches at the shoulder and measure 5-½ feet from snout to tail (approximately the size of a large German shepherd). Coat color varies, but solid black or white Mexican wolves do not occur.

Coyotes (top) and Mexican gray wolves (bottom) can be difficult to differentiate at a distance or at quick glance; Mexican gray wolves weigh two to three times more, have larger, blocky heads with more-rounded ears, and feet larger in proportion to the body. Not all wolves have radio collars. Photo courtesy of the Mexican Wolf Inter-agency Field Team.

