

**Management Options For
Mexican Wolves Outside the MWEPA
June 27, 2022 version**

ISSUE: Mexican wolves that move outside the Mexican Wolf Experimental Population Area (MWEPA) including north of I-40 are fully endangered under the Endangered Species Act (Act) so all actions identified as take provisions outlined in Section 9 of the Act apply. Therefore, livestock owners, the public, including local residents cannot haze or harass wolves north of I-40 without violating the Act unless the wolf actively poses a threat to human safety.

BACKGROUND: The 2017 Mexican Wolf Recovery Plan, First Revision directs Mexican wolf recovery within historical range, which is south of I-40 in the U.S. and Mexico. Mexican wolves are managed south of I-40 under section 10(j) of the Act through a Nonessential Experimental population designation, which provides management flexibility and aids in the conservation and recovery of the Mexican wolf. The 10(j) designation allows for increased management flexibility including take provisions that are not considered Section 9 violations. This management flexibility allows added public safety and livestock management practices to reduce depredations while ensuring recovery of the Mexican wolf.

For wolves outside the MWEPA, a section 10(a)(1)(A) permit allows the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, state game and fish agencies, other federal and tribal staff to translocate wolves back to the MWEPA. The 10(a)(1)(A) permit states “Authorized Permittees will capture and at the direction of the USFWS Mexican Wolf Recovery Coordinator, return to the MWEPA, transfer to captivity, or relocate to Mexico, any Mexican wolves that have dispersed from the experimental population and that **establish wholly outside the MWEPA** in Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, Colorado, Utah, Nevada, and California.”

COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY:

It is important that appropriate communication take place related to a wolf outside the MWEPA. The steps below are outlined to blend the need for information dissemination and ensure effective livestock management and public safety.

- U.S. Forest Service Interagency Field Team (IFT) liaison notifies permittees and local Forest Service Offices – Initiate at the time a wolf is documented to have left the MWEPA.
- State Game and Fish Agencies’ IFT lead notifies the public when appropriate.
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service IFT lead notifies Tribes and other federal agencies that are in proximity to the location where a Mexican wolf establishes outside the MWEPA for a period of 14 days

MANAGEMENT OPTIONS: (for Mexican wolves that establish wholly outside the MWEPA)

- Monitor for at least 14 days to provide time for the wolf to establish wholly outside or return to the MWEPA on its own unless the wolf exhibits unacceptable behavior such as aggression towards humans or is involved in livestock depredation during the 14-day monitoring period. If the wolf establishes wholly outside of the MWEPA, plans for translocation will be initiated and implemented as soon as practical and with full consideration for the welfare of the wolf and the affected human environment where the wolf is located.
- If the wolf has no depredation history:
 - On federal or state land, monitor the wolf's movements daily, notify appropriate entities, and translocate only if there is livestock depredation, proximity to houses, aggression towards humans, or any other behavior deemed to be unacceptable or abnormal for a wolf.
 - On private land, translocate at the request of the landowner
- Capture immediately for translocation if the wolf has a history of depredations or displays unacceptable behaviors in proximity to humans.

In that Tribal Nations are Sovereign entities, it is fully within the Tribes authorities to either accept the presence of a Mexican wolf on their Sovereign lands or to request the immediate removal from their lands at the sole discretion of the Tribe's leadership.