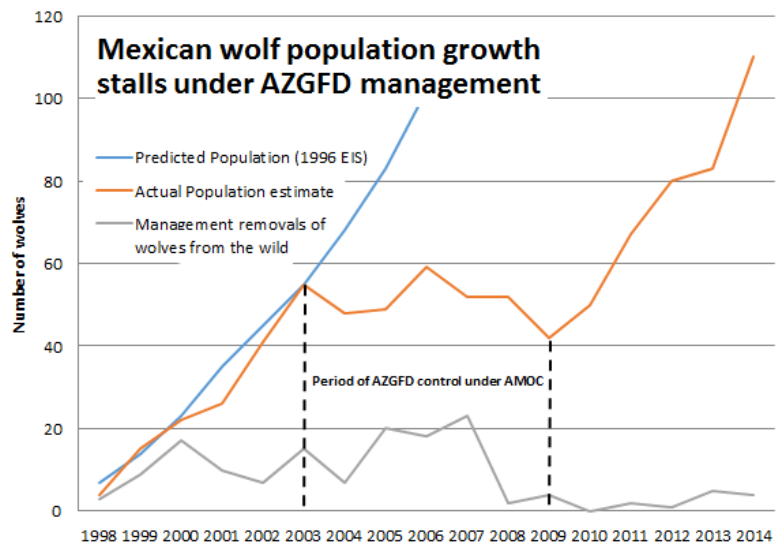




# Whose Side Are They On?

## Seven Ways Arizona Game and Fish Sabotages Wolf Recovery

The Arizona Game and Fish Commission and the agency it oversees, the Arizona Game and Fish Department, are charged with protecting all of Arizona's wildlife. Yet they have gone to extraordinary lengths to prevent the recovery of the Mexican gray wolf, and their actions could prove deadly for lobos.



- 1) **ARIZONA ASKED CONGRESS TO REMOVE ALL FEDERAL PROTECTIONS FOR MEXICAN GRAY WOLVES WHEN THERE WERE ONLY 50 WILD LOBOS IN THE ENTIRE WORLD.** The department sent a letter to congressional representatives asking that the lobo be delisted from the Endangered Species Act.<sup>1</sup>
- 2) **ARIZONA IS BLOCKING NEW WOLF RELEASES.** On August 7, 2015, the commission voted unanimously to oppose all releases of adult wolves from captivity, even though scientists confirm that the wolves cannot recover without additional releases to boost their genetic health.<sup>2</sup>
- 3) **ARIZONA SUPPORTS INCREASED KILLING AND WOLF REMOVALS.** The state ignores the 77% of Arizonans who support wolf recovery<sup>3</sup> when they advocate making it easier to kill and remove these highly endangered wolves, including killing whole families accused of preying on livestock, killing wolves for eating elk or for unspecified "conflicts with human activities."<sup>4</sup>
- 4) **ARIZONA PUBLICLY INTERFERED WITH RECOVERY PLANNING.** When draft recommendations from the recovery team scientists displeased the commission, a commissioner publicly leaked the draft plan, even though it was still confidential.<sup>5</sup>
- 5) **MANAGEMENT BY THE STATE RESULTED IN FEWER WOLVES.** From 2003 through 2009, while the state led the wolf reintroduction program, the wild population dropped from 55 to 42. In 2009, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service resumed control of the program. From 2010 to 2014, the wolf population rose from 50 to 109.<sup>6</sup>
- 6) **ARIZONA WANTS TO KEEP WOLF NUMBERS TOO LOW.** Recently, they convinced the US Fish and Wildlife Service to cap the number of endangered Mexican gray wolves allowed in the wild, removing or killing any wolves above the limit. They got a cap of 325<sup>7</sup> wolves (far below the numbers scientists say are necessary for recovery), but advocated for an even smaller number of 200-300.<sup>8</sup>
- 7) **ARIZONA WANTS WOLVES KEPT OUT OF THE AREAS THEY NEED TO RECOVER.** They support trapping or killing any lobos that travel toward key habitats north of Interstate 40, areas that scientists say are crucial for recovery. They even thwarted the public process, extracting this promise about the Interstate 40 boundary behind closed doors.<sup>9</sup>

## Citations

<sup>1</sup> See 7 December 2010 letter from AZ G&F Department Director Larry Voyles, on behalf of the commission: “We ask that you help us . . . to delist the wolf rangewide (including the Mexican wolf)”

<sup>2</sup> On August 7, 2015, the commission voted to oppose all new releases of adult wolves, and to allow only 6 cross-fostered pups per year. Cross-fostering means moving pups born in captivity into a wild den, a technique which has proven successful only once. Previously, on December 2, 2011, the Commission voted to oppose the release of any new wolves from captivity until the Service completes a new recovery plan, management plan, and 10(j) rule. The Commission amended this policy on January 13, 2012 to allow limited “replacement releases” for animals that are killed. The “gatekeeping” issue is discussed in the USFWS’ release plans for 2015; see **Mexican Wolf Blue Range Reintroduction Project**, Replacement Release, Initial Release and Translocation Proposal for 2015, IFT Final Proposal: February 24, 2015.

<sup>3</sup> See 2008, Research and Polling, Inc., page 12. <http://www.mexicanwolves.org/pdf/Reading17WolfSurveyAZ.pdf>

See also 2013, Tulchin Research

<http://www.mexicanwolves.org/uploads/polling/Polling%20memo%20AZ%20NM%202013.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> See cover letter to Benjamin Tuggle, April 15, 2014. Arizona Game and Fish Department is the first signatory. Letter accompanies “Mexican wolf management in Arizona and New Mexico: A Cooperating Agencies Alternative,” 15 April 2014. See Cooperating Agencies Alternative: “. . . removals will occur as necessary to reduce the state-wide population to no more than 150 wolves” (page 8, 5a). These removals would include killing; see page 8 5b iv and v. See page 8, 9. For removals due to depredations, and page 18, bb. (iii) for removal of entire families including pups. For elk removals including removing wolves down to a population of 100 in the state, see page 22, (e). For killing wolves “to avoid conflict with human activities” see page 24, (ii).

<sup>5</sup> See Complaint of Scientific and Scholarly Misconduct: Intentional Interference in Developing Science-based Recovery Criteria and Suitable Habitat in the Mexican Wolf Recovery Plan by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and State “Partners” to Subvert the Application of Best Scientific Information Regarding Wolf Recovery, June 7, 2012, page 7.

<sup>6</sup> See *Mexican wolf population stalls under AZGFD management*. Population numbers from USFWS, see [http://www.fws.gov/southwest/es/mexicanwolf/pdf/MW\\_popcount\\_web.pdf](http://www.fws.gov/southwest/es/mexicanwolf/pdf/MW_popcount_web.pdf) Removal numbers from USFWS, see [http://www.fws.gov/southwest/es/mexicanwolf/pdf/MW\\_removal\\_causes\\_web.pdf](http://www.fws.gov/southwest/es/mexicanwolf/pdf/MW_removal_causes_web.pdf) (graph totals livestock, nuisance and boundary removals). For further discussion, see Environmental Impact Statement for the Proposed Revision to the Regulations for the Nonessential Experimental Population of the Mexican Wolf (*Canis lupus baileyi*), Final Mexican Wolf Recovery Program, November 2014, pages 1-17 to 1-18.

<sup>7</sup> See Environmental Impact Statement for the Proposed Revision to the Regulations for the Nonessential Experimental Population of the Mexican Wolf (*Canis lupus baileyi*), Final, Mexican Wolf Recovery Program, November 2014, page 2-36 for statement on rationale for 325 cap. [http://www.fws.gov/southwest/es/mexicanwolf/pdf/EIS\\_for\\_the\\_Proposed\\_Revision\\_to\\_the\\_Regulations\\_for\\_the\\_Nonessential\\_Experimental\\_Population\\_of\\_the\\_Mexican\\_Wolf.pdf](http://www.fws.gov/southwest/es/mexicanwolf/pdf/EIS_for_the_Proposed_Revision_to_the_Regulations_for_the_Nonessential_Experimental_Population_of_the_Mexican_Wolf.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> See Environmental Impact Statement for the Proposed revision to the nonessential experimental population of the Mexican wolf (*Canis lupus baileyi*) Draft, 16 July 2014, pages 2-9 to 2-10. [http://www.fws.gov/southwest/es/mexicanwolf/pdf/Mexican\\_Wolf\\_DEIS\\_July\\_2014.pdf](http://www.fws.gov/southwest/es/mexicanwolf/pdf/Mexican_Wolf_DEIS_July_2014.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> See 1 August 2013 letter from AZ G&F Department Director Larry Voyles, to US Fish and Wildlife Director Dan Ashe “. . . Rowan Gould and Gary Frazer both acknowledged . . . that the final rule will direct the USFWS to capture and return any Mexican wolf that disperses outside the MWEPA.”