



# *Living With Wildlife in the Southwest*

## Coexisting With Mexican Wolves and Jaguars



The southwestern United States and northern Mexico are home to a spectacular diversity of landscapes and wildlife, including two predators struggling to regain their footing in their historic habitat: Mexican gray wolves and jaguars.

The Mexican gray wolf, also known as “el lobo,” is the most endangered wolf subspecies in the world. Essentially eradicated from the Southwest by the 1930s, Mexican wolves today number only 58 in the wild in Arizona and New Mexico, the result of a captive-breeding and reintroduction program.

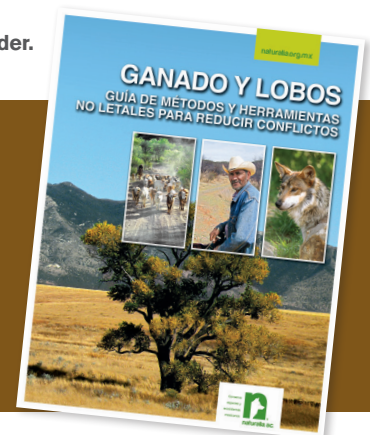
Jaguars also once roamed across the southwestern United States. Now they too are endangered, relegated to the U.S.-Mexico borderlands where their decline over the last 100 years continues as development and human activity encroach on habitat and migration routes.

Two verified jaguar sightings were reported in southern

Arizona in 2011, and three known populations exist in Sonora, Mexico—the nearest one about 100 miles south of the Arizona border.

Because they sometimes prey on livestock, Mexican wolves are often killed or removed to protect against future losses. This approach to addressing conflict is one of the primary obstacles to successful wolf restoration in the Southwest. Jaguars also occasionally take livestock, making them unpopular with ranchers south of the border and the target of retaliatory killings. Defenders of Wildlife is dedicated to ending the vicious cycle of livestock loss and predator removal that poses a barrier to the recovery of Mexican gray wolves and jaguars.

**Defenders collaborated with Naturalia, a Mexican conservation group, to produce a manual on coexistence tools and methods for ranchers south of the border.**



*“By working together we are moving from conflict to a sustainable future for wolves and jaguars... and for the people who share the land with them.”*

—Craig Miller, Southwest Representative, Defenders of Wildlife





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**Range riders follow a herd of cattle through wolf country in New Mexico. The riders provide a much-needed human presence on the range, watching for wolves and taking action as needed.**

### Living with el lobo

In conjunction with the reintroduction of wolves in the Southwest, Defenders initiated a regional coexistence program focused on conflict prevention. We work closely with ranchers, federal, state and tribal agency biologists and resource managers, researchers and community and conservation groups to implement and cost-share nonlethal wolf deterrents and best management practices for livestock in wolf country. Because reservation lands are a vital link between where the wolves are now and where they need to be to recover fully, our work with the White Mountain Apache Tribe is especially important. To date, we have:

- Invested a total of \$250,000 in more than 60 proactive wolf coexistence projects, successfully bridging the gap between conservation and ranching interests in the American Southwest and Northwest Mexico.
- Published *Livestock and Wolves: A Guide to Nonlethal Tools and Methods to Reduce Conflicts*, a how-to manual widely used by livestock producers and wolf managers throughout the American Southwest since 2008, and collaborated with the Mexican conservation group Naturalia on a 2011 edition for ranchers south of the border.
- Established a range-rider program in partnership with the White Mountain Apache Tribe that trains and equips tribal cowboys to watch over livestock and discourage wolves from getting too close.

- Placed “camera traps” in the wildest places on White Mountain reservation lands to learn more about Mexican wolves and their movements and offered cash rewards to tribal livestock associations for the images captured, providing a financial incentive for living with wolves on reservation lands.

### Paving the way for jaguars

Defenders also works to promote coexistence with jaguars by supporting ranchers’ adoption of electric fencing and other predator-detering tools and livestock management practices that help reduce conflicts. We have:

- Partnered with the Northern Jaguar Project and Naturalia to establish a Jaguar Guardian Program to minimize conflicts with livestock and reduce retaliatory jaguar killings. The Jaguar Guardians patrol the Northern Jaguar Reserve in Sonora, Mexico—home to the northernmost breeding population of jaguars—and develop relationships with surrounding ranch owners to share information about living with jaguars.
- Co-sponsored the Landowner Camera Contest, a program that provides an incentive for conserving jaguars by paying ranchers for camera-trap images of the cats on their property.

**A ranch hand sets a motion camera on a ranch in northern Sonora, Mexico, that is participating in a noninvasive monitoring and incentive program that rewards ranchers for images of jaguars recorded on their property.**



COURTESY NATURALIA/NORTHERN JAGUAR PROJECT



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To learn more about Defenders’ coexistence work, visit [www.defenders.org](http://www.defenders.org)