

## Symbol of recovery: Well-known wolf dies during exam

By Sun-News Report

Brunhilda, or F511, the alpha female of the Francisco Pack and one of the most-loved wolves in the Mexican Wolf Recovery Program, died Thursday during a routine examination.

Wolf F511, or Brunhilda, as she was known, was made famous by this photo, taken of her while she was being released into the wild in 1998. Brunhilda died Thursday during a routine capture and check by U.S. Fish and Wildlife veterinarians. (Courtesy file photo)

According to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service officials, the wolf overheated during a routine capture and checkup at the Wolf Management Facility at Sevilleta National Wildlife Refuge near Socorro. Despite veterinary care, however, the wolf died.

“This is a sad loss, as this female has been such an integral part of our program to reintroduce the wolf back into its native lands,” said Dale Hall, director of the service’s Southwest region. “Her picture has been used repeatedly for posters, brochures and other outreach materials and she quickly became recognized as the symbol for Mexican wolf recovery.”

F511 was born in 1997 at the Wolf Management Facility at Sevilleta National Wildlife Refuge. She was one of the first wolves reintroduced into the wild in Arizona in 1998 with her parents as part of the Campbell Blue Pack.

F511 was at the facility with her four pups, her mate, M904 and her yearling male, M919, after being captured earlier this year

and removed from the Gila Wilderness because of multiple cattle depredations.

“None of the other wolves experienced any complications and their health appears to be good,” Victoria Fox, spokeswoman for Fish and Wildlife, said. “The service expects the two males to step into the role of caregiver for the four pups.”

Michael Robinson, with the Center for Biological Diversity, said the event was a sad one and that he was in disbelief.

“I’m shocked she’s dead,” Robinson said. “What happened to her is unbelievably sad.”

The wolf had been made famous after a photo of her, which was taken in 1998 as she was released into the wild, became a poster put out by Fish and Wildlife to promote the program.

Fox said she was unable to say Friday whether similar cases of wolves dying during routine captures and inspections had occurred. Robinson, however, said F511 is the thirteenth to die from such circumstances, including the wolf’s previous litter of five wild-conceived pups, who died from stress from the noise of a construction project near their pen, in spring 2003.

“This wolf was put through the ringer,” Robinson said. “How many more endangered lobos are going to be trapped, shot, lose their pups and die of shock and stress as a result of the Bush administration’s refusal to follow scientific recommendations?”

Fox said the wolves are often checked on an “as-needed” basis and said F511 will leave a legacy in the seven wild-born litters and pups currently in captivity that will help keep the program going.

“The legacy she could leave us is that someday the pups will have a future in the wild,” Fox said.



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