



The Mexican Gray Wolf has just been reintroduced into Southwest Forests.

## A Two Million Acre Forest

The Apache Sitgreaves National Forest

*(From the US Forest Service)*

The Apache and the Sitgreaves National Forests were administratively combined in 1974 and are now managed as one unit from the Forest Supervisor's Office in Springerville. The two million acre Forest encompasses magnificent mountain country in east-central Arizona along the Mogollon Rim and the White Mountains.

What makes this Forest so special? Its the water...lots of it...draining the high mountains and forming numerous lakes and streams...a fisherman's paradise in the arid Southwest.

The Apache-Sitgreaves has 34 lakes and reservoirs and more than 680 miles of rivers and streams - more than can be found in any other Southwestern National Forest. The White Mountains contain the headwaters of several Arizona rivers including the Black, the Little Colorado, and the San Francisco.

The Sitgreaves was named for Captain Lorenzo Sitgreaves, a government topographical engineer who conducted the first scientific expedition across Arizona in the early 1850's. On the Sitgreaves, the major attractions for visitors from the hot valleys of Phoenix or Tucson are the Mogollon Rim and the string of man-made lakes. From the Rim's 7600-foot elevation, vista points provide inspiring views of the low country to the south and west.

Four rivers lie in the forest, including the Black, Little Colorado, the Blue and San Francisco. Elevations in the forest range from 3,500 feet to the 11,590-foot summit of Mount Baldy on the White Mountain Apache Indian Reservation.

The Apache-Sitgreaves provides habitat for over 400 species of wildlife. The forest is home to most big game animals, such as antelope, elk, deer, bighorn sheep, and turkey, as well as a variety of songbirds, waterfowl, small mammals, fish, amphibians and reptiles. There are opportunities throughout the forest for photographers, casual observers, hunters, and anglers.

A leisurely drive in the twilight may yield wonderful rewards as it is during the evening twilight and early morning hours that wildlife within the forest are most active and can be seen most anywhere if you look hard enough.

Deer and elk come out to feed in the early morning and evening, watch for them at the forest's edge or in meadows.

A lucky wildlife viewer may catch sight of a mountain lion, a black bear, or the newly reintroduced Mexican gray wolf. Sightings of these large predators are rare occurrences and should be viewed as something truly special, not merely because of the scarcity of these animals but also because of their secretive nature.