

Wild Horse Update September 2010

The Wildlife Society (TWS)

TWS has recently issued a feral horse fact sheet identifying the issues and remedies from their perspective. The fact sheet can be found on their website at:

http://joomla.wildlife.org/documents/policy/feral_horses_1.pdf

Tuscarora Wild Horse Roundup

A final total of 1,224 horses were rounded up after a federal judge denied a request for a temporary restraining order by a wild horse advocate group. Of that total, 1,064 horses were transported to holding facilities in Utah and Sparks and made available for adoption. BLM applied a fertility control vaccine to 64 mares and released them and an additional 62 mares back to the HMA. A total of 34 horses either died or were humanely euthanized during gather operations. The Nevada State BLM Director said that the hauling of over 46,000 gallons of water for the horse saved the lives of hundreds of the horse that were round up. This emergency gather was in part justified by the lack of available water.

Little Humboldt Herd Management Area

Sex ratio adjustments and fertility control were tools applied to the herd currently in the Rock Creek area of Humboldt County. It is expected that these tools will slow down population growth in this area. A gather in the area is expected to remove 425 excess horses that have moved outside of the herd management area.

Reveille Wild Horse Gather

The BLM has issued the decision Record to gather 198 horses and leave approximately 80 horses in the herd management area located 50 miles east of Tonopah. There are currently 278 horses in the area (after foaling) which is about twice the number the area can support. The gather goals were based upon a 3-5 year population growth estimate. The gather is scheduled for the first week of September 2010.

Montezuma/Paymaster Wild Horse and Burro Gather

The Tonopah Field Office is proposing to gather 149 excess horses and 71 excess burros in an area just west of Goldfield. The roundup is planned for September 2010.

Eagle Herd Management Area

Earlier this year the BLM determined there was not adequate time to safely conduct a proposed gather of 50 horses planned for the area near Pioche. At least 3 horses have been hit by vehicles in the past year in this area.

Moriah Herd Management Area

The Ely BLM District has issued a decision to gather 72 excess horses from an area 48 miles northeast of Ely. The roundup began on August 27th and was expected to take 4 days to complete.

Silver King Herd Management Area

The commenting period closed on July 16th on an environmental assessment that addressed the gathering of 445 excess horses in an area 70 miles south of Ely. The proposed gather would be scheduled for September 2010. If more horses are gathered than the goal, selective releases would occur to meet a sex ratio of 60% males to 40% females. A decision is pending.

Twin Peaks Herd Management Area

The BLM has issued its decision to proceed with a roundup of 2,300 wild horses including 1,855 excess horses and 205 burros from the Twin Peaks Herd Management area which straddles the Nevada-California state line north and west of Pyramid Lake. A lawsuit filed against this action by wild horse advocates alleges violations of the Wild and Free Roaming Horses and Burros Act and the National Environmental Policy Act. The gather is currently in progress.

Eagle, Chokecherry and Mt. Elinore Herd Management Area

Comments were due on September 4th on proposed gathers planned for the eastern Nevada/Utah border area. All three HMAs are over AML. A total of 748 horses are considered excess and will be planned for removal. If more than 748 horses are gathered, a selective release would be planned to target a 60% male/40% female ratio.

The following four gathers are addressed in a single Draft Environmental Assessment. Comments are due by September 23rd. NDOW plans to support the gathers but will comment to have the gather achieve AML first, and then use PZP vaccines to help maintain horse numbers within AML. BLM proposes to use the injections to achieve AML over a 2-3 year period and release horses that are gathered at levels above AML.

Clan Alpine Herd Management Area

The plans are to gather 580 horses and vaccinate 232 mares with a 2-year fertility control vaccine. Plans are then to release all of the captured animals. The gather is planned for February 2011.

Pilot Mountain Herd Management Area Gather

The plan is to gather 242 horses; remove 53 excess horses vaccinate 76 mares with a 2-year fertility control vaccine and release 189 horses (including those vaccinated). An additional 104 horses residing outside of the HMA will be gathered and removed.

Pine Nut Mountains Herd Management Area Gather

The plan is to gather 118 horses, vaccinate 45 mares with a fertility control vaccine and then release all 118 horses. 67 additional horses residing outside of the HMA will be gathered and removed.

Lahontan Herd Management Area

Current estimates of horses in this area are 104 which is approximately 94 horses in excess of the upper AML limit. The EA analyses the impacts of these horses and the potential effect of gather and removal.