



NATIONAL HORSE & BURRO RANGELAND MANAGEMENT COALITION

Advocating for commonsense, ecologically-sound approaches to managing horses and burros to promote healthy wildlife and rangelands for future generations

HORSES AND BURROS: OVERVIEW

Wild Horse and Burro Populations Estimated on BLM Lands

140,000 estimated in 2021

73,000 in 2017

25,000 in 1971

Populations double every 4-5 years

Appropriate Management Level: 27,000

The majority of wild horses and burros on public land reside on **Bureau of Land Management (BLM)** lands.

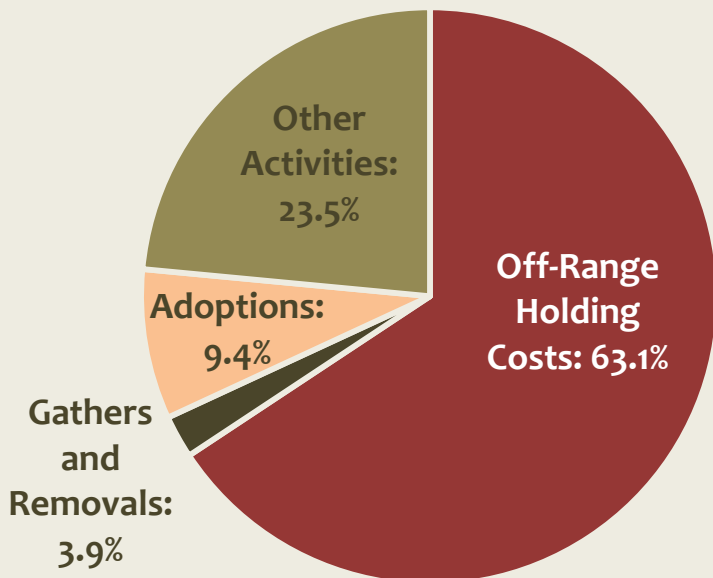
There are **177 HMAs** on BLM land, amounting to **31.6 million acres**.

Herd Management Areas (HMA) are areas currently managed for wild horses and burros. HMAs are based on where viable populations of horses and burros roamed in 1971.

BLM scientists establish **Appropriate Management Levels (AML)** for HMAs to promote healthy conditions & thriving ecological balance.

The **Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act of 1971** directs U.S. federal agencies to manage wild herds to “maintain a thriving natural ecological balance and multiple-use relationship.”

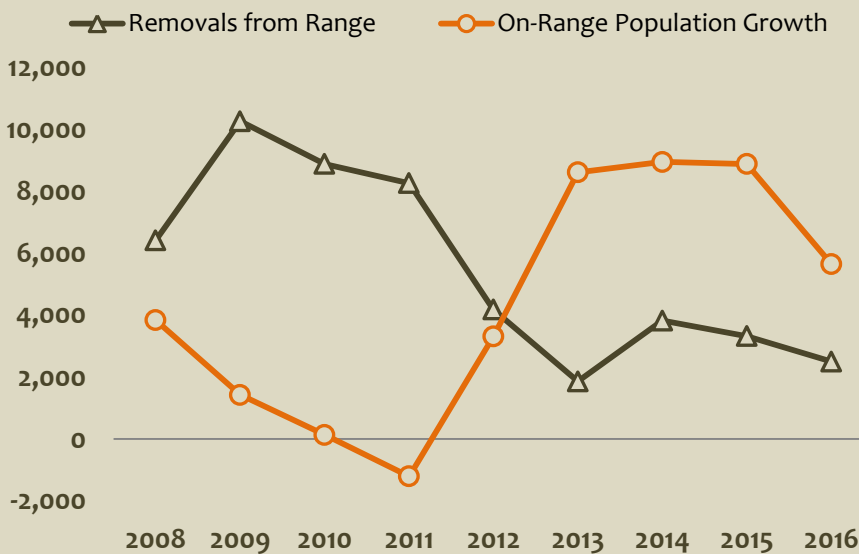
BLM Wild Horse and Burro Program Expenditures in Fiscal Year 2016



(Credit: BLM Nevada)

Over-population of horses can lead to a depletion of food and water resources. (Ostermann-Kelm 2009)

Wild Horse and Burro Removals vs. Population Growth



Over the last 10 years, horse adoptions have declined by nearly 70%

There are a total of **46,015** wild horses and burros living in BLM off-range holding facilities as of March 2017.

- 70% in off-range pastures
- 29% in off-range corrals
- 1% in eco-sanctuaries

In fiscal year 2016, **3,116** horses and burros were placed into private care, while on-range population grew by **more than 6,000**.

- 2,912 adoptions
- 204 sales

In fiscal year 2016, off-range holding costs accounted for **63%** of the total Wild Horse and Burro Program budget

In fiscal year 2003, off-range holding costs totaled \$16 million. Today, off-range holding costs total nearly **\$50 million**

Due to the high cost of caring for animals, BLM is now only removing as many animals from the range as can be adopted, leaving more excess horses on the rangelands

What about Fertility Control?

The current available fertility control vaccine (*procine zona pellucida*) is only effective for 22 months and must be hand-injected into a wild horse. A second formulation can be deployed via ground darting, but is only effective for one year. Alternative methods are being researched.

Since 2012, BLM has applied PZP to **2,574** horses.

United States Department of the Interior. Bureau of Land Management. Wild Horse and Burro Quick Facts. 2016.

<http://www.blm.gov/wo/st/en/prog/whbprogram/history_and_facts/quick_facts.html> Accessed March 2016.

Osterman-Kelm, S., E.A. Atwill, E.S. Rubin, L.E. Hendrickson, and W.M. Boyce. 2009. Impacts of feral horses on a desert environment. *BioMed Central Ecology* 9(22)

American Farm Bureau Federation • American Sheep Industry Association • Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation
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National Association of Counties • National Association of State Departments of Agriculture
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