



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

130,000 estimated in 2020

67,000 in 2016

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.

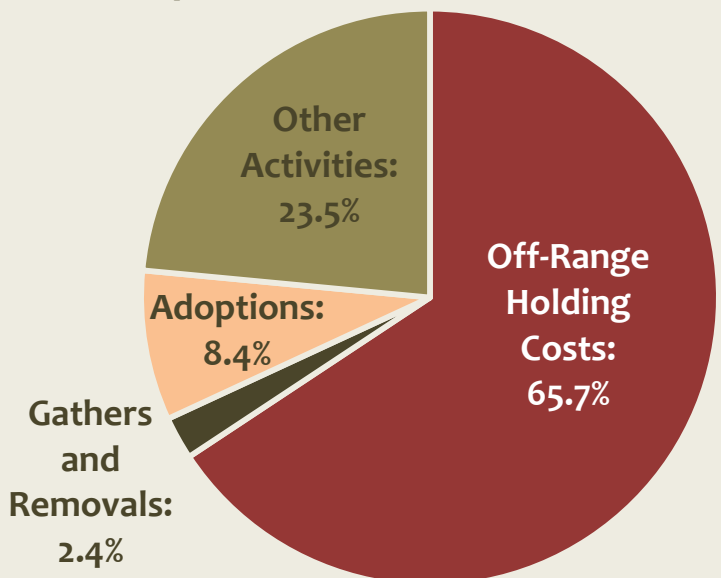
There are **179 HMAs** on BLM land, amounting to **31.6 million acres**.

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."

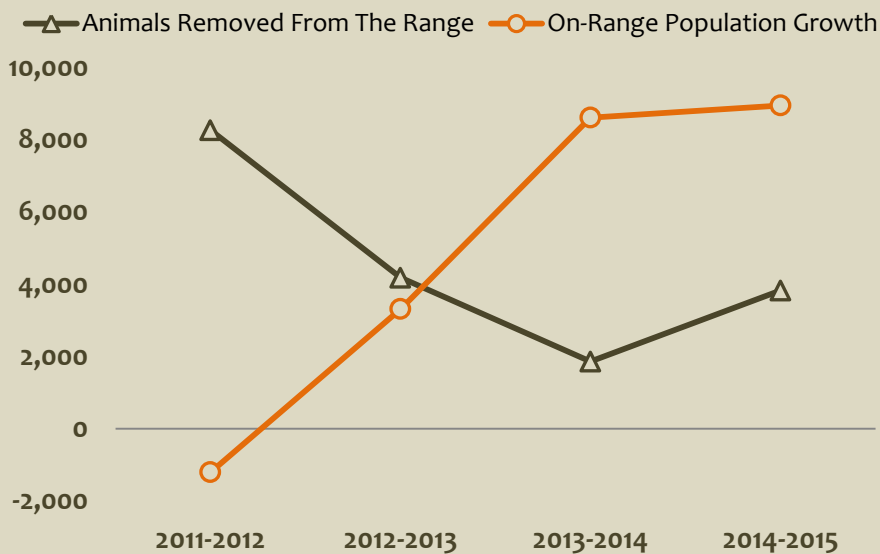
BLM Wild Horse and Burro Program Expenditures in Fiscal Year 2015



(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 **47,478** wild horses and burros living in BLM off-range holding facilities as of Feb 2016.

- 65% in off-range pastures
- 34% in off-range corrals
- 1% in eco-sanctuaries

In fiscal year 2015, **2,898** horses and burros were placed into private care, while on-range population grew by **more than 10,000**.

- 2,631 adoptions
- 267 sales

In 2015, off-range holding costs totaled to nearly **\$50 million**

BLM's off-range holding costs have been steadily rising, from **59% of the Horse and Burro budget in 2012 to 66% in 2015**

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 **1,045** 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 • Masters of Foxhounds Association
Mule Deer Foundation • National Association of Conservation Districts • National Cattlemen's Beef Association
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