



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

HORSE AND BURRO WELL-BEING

Wild Horse and Burro Facts

- BLM rangelands can support <27,000 horses and burros.
- There are currently >67,000 horses and burros on BLM ranges.
- Horse populations double every 4 years.
- There are >46,000 horses and burros in BLM off-range holding facilities.
- Taxpayers pay about \$50 million per year to care for horses and burros in holding.

Competition for resources can lead to *starvation, dehydration, and death* of wild horses and burros.

Even if all cattle were removed from the rangelands, wild horse and burro populations are projected to **surpass what Herd Management Areas (HMA) can support** by 2018.

BLM removed **9,073** animals from the range in **24** emergency gathers from **2006-2015**

Cold Creek Emergency Gather, Sept. 2015



Horses and burros that do not have adequate access to food will suffer a long, drawn-out death from starvation or become more susceptible to disease as a result of their poor health and emaciated condition.

The herd in this area was traveling more than 10 miles between water and forage areas, adding additional stress to the population. Veterinary reports found some individuals to be emaciated beyond recovery.

There were no cattle grazing in this area.

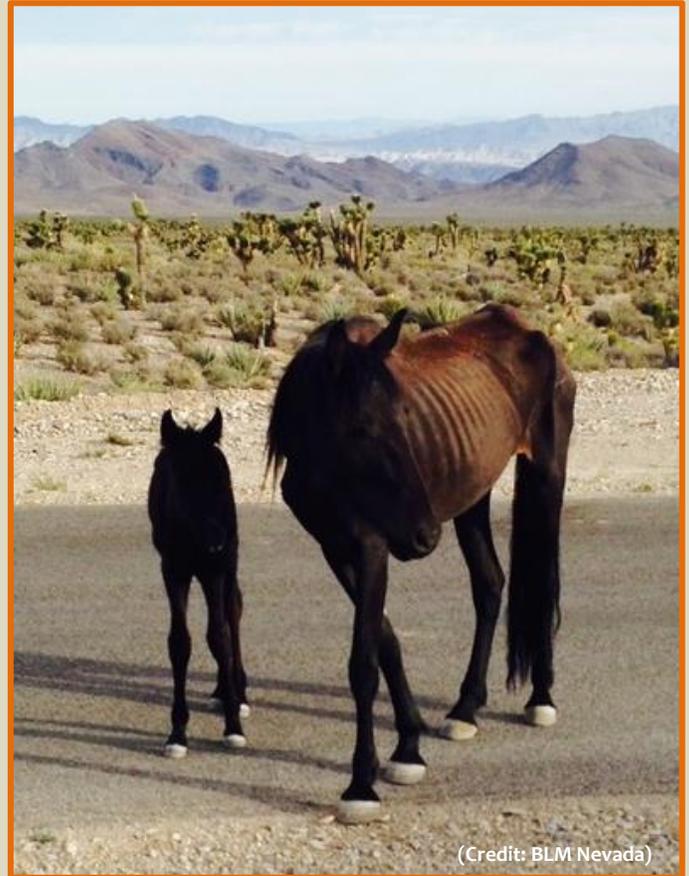
Why does this happen?

Excess horses and burros significantly impact riparian areas in the arid and semi-arid rangelands they occupy. Their foraging behaviors result in the destruction of vegetative cover that would otherwise help protect from soil erosion, water contamination, and desertification (Osterman-Kelm 2009).

As water resources become depleted through desertification, horse and burro populations concentrate around limited water supplies. This concentration then amplifies the negative impacts of their foraging behavior.

Horse and burro populations will eventually exceed HMA carrying capacity, or the maximum population a HMA can viably support. At that point, limited resource availability will result in dehydration, starvation, and die-offs unless BLM intervenes.

Cold Creek Emergency Gather, Sept. 2015



(Credit: BLM Nevada)

When dehydration occurs, horses and burros experience extreme thirst, cramping, and lethargy before their blood pressure becomes so low that their hearts can no longer beat.

Improved management actions are needed for the humane treatment of free-roaming horses and burros.

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

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<http://www.blm.gov/nv/st/en/fo/ely_field_office/blm_programs/grazing/grazing_permit_renewals/grazing_permit_summaries/paris_livestock_term.print.html> Accessed April 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)

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