

Fact Sheet

Pine Nut Wild Horse Herd

Where is the herd and what is special about these animals?

- The Pine Nut Wild Horse Herd covers about 90,000 acres of public and private land acres in the Pine Nut Herd Management Area (HMA), located near Carson City and Dayton, Nevada.
- The BLM has determined the appropriate management level (AML) to be between 119-179 horses in the Pine Nut HMA.
- Current horse population estimates are approximately 148 horses within the HMA, and 67 residing outside the HMA.
- The area is also utilized by livestock (under terms and conditions outlined in grazing permits) and a variety of wildlife, including pronghorn antelope and mule deer.
- The Pine Nut wild horses are most likely descendants of local ranch horses that were found in 1971 in what is now the HMA.



Pine Nut Management Area

What needs to be done to maintain the herd within the HMA?

- To maintain a healthy Pine Nut herd and to restore or maintain the rangelands in a healthy condition, the BLM plans to treat approximately 45 mares with Porcine Zona Pellucida (PZP), a two-year fertility control vaccine, and release all horses back into the HMA to achieve ecological balance.
- Post-gather, every effort will be made to return the released horses to the same general area from which they were gathered. The BLM intends to return to these HMAs in 2-3 years, if necessary, to gather and retreat the mares to maintain the proposed population control measures.

Why is the HMA gather necessary?

- Slowing population growth by treating mares with PZP would ensure that the remaining wild horses are healthy and vigorous and in balance with other range resources.
- Treating 45 mares will slow reproduction, helping to maintain a healthy Pine Nut herd and to restore or maintain the rangelands in a healthy condition, maintaining the Appropriate Management Level (AML), and reduce the number of excess wild horses that would need to be removed in the future.

- Maintaining wild horse populations within AML sustains a healthy horse population, ensures a thriving natural ecological balance, and prevents degradation to rangeland conditions by deterring negative impacts to rangeland resources that can result from wild horse over population. This has been demonstrated by the evaluation of key areas and ecological sites under rangeland health assessments protocol. Damage results from over utilization of resources when populations exceed the carrying capacity of the rangeland.
- Reducing wild horse populations to within established AMLs will make significant progress in attaining the management objectives identified in the Carson City Consolidated Resource Management Plan (CRMP) and the Standards for Rangeland Health & Guidelines for Grazing Management (S&Gs) in the Sierra Front Northwestern Great Basin Area.

How are fertility control and adjusting the sex ratio implemented?

- Fertility control treatments and modification of sex ratios of released animals would slow population growth and could increase the time period before another gather was required. If the gather efficiency exceeds 85-88% (445 wild horses) then the following management actions would be implemented to the degree possible while still achieving the low range AML:
- All mares selected for release, including those previously treated with fertility control, would be treated/retreated with a two-year Porcine Zona Pellucida (PZP-22) or similar vaccine and released back to the range. Immuno-contraceptive research would be conducted in accordance with the approved standard operating and post-treatment monitoring procedures. Mares would be selected to maintain a diverse age structure, herd characteristics and conformation.
- Studs selected for release would be released to increase the post-gather sex ratio to approximately 60% studs in the remaining herds. Studs would be selected to maintain a diverse age structure, herd characteristics and conformation.
- Animals would be removed using a selective removal strategy to the extent possible. Selective removal criteria include:
 1. First Priority: Age Class-Four Years and Younger
 2. Second Priority: Age Class-Eleven to Nineteen Years Old
 3. Third Priority: Age Class Five to Ten Years Old
 4. Fourth Priority: Age Class Twenty Years and Older

Post-gather, every effort would be made to return released horses to the same general area from which they were gathered.

Are there horses outside the HMA that BLM will be gathering?

- There are approximately 67 horses residing well outside of the HMA boundaries. These horses will be gathered and removed. If these 67 wild horses were captured and released back into the HMA they will simply return to their adopted home range off the HMA.
- Between 12-20 of these horses are 12+ miles outside of the HMA in a mix of public and private lands in the Fish Springs area of Douglas County. Some of these horses have been a problem for some private land owners, as well as posing a public safety hazard on public roads. The rest of the 67 horses residing outside of the HMA are primarily in the Buckskin Range of Lyon County.
- Wild horses removed from the range will be offered for adoption to qualified individuals through the BLM's Wild Horse and Burro Adoption Program. Un-adopted horses will be placed in long-term pastures where they will be humanely cared for and will retain their "wild" status and protection under the 1971 law. The BLM does not sell or send any horses to slaughter.

How does BLM determine the Appropriate Management Level (AML) for horses?

- The AMLs were established upon completion of an in-depth analysis of habitat suitability, resource monitoring and population inventory data.
- The upper limit of the AML range is the maximum number of wild horses that can be maintained within an HMA while maintaining a thriving natural ecological balance and multiple use relationship on the public lands.
- Establishing the AMLs within a population range allows for the periodic removal of excess animals (to the low end) and subsequent population growth (to the maximum level) between removals.
- Development of the Herd Management Area Plans (HMAP) for Pilot Mountain included public involvement.

Which livestock grazing allotments overlay with this wild horse HMA?

- Portions of the Pine Nut HMA are within the Clifton, Eldorado, Hackett Canyon, Mill Canyon, Rawe Peak, Buckeye, Churchill Canyon, and Sunrise Livestock Grazing Allotments.
- Forage is allocated by Animal Unit Months (AUMs). An AUM is the amount of forage consumed in a month by an adult horse, a mare and foal, two burros, an adult cow or cow and calf, or five sheep.
- BLM actively manages authorized livestock use to mitigate the impacts, while wild horses and burros roam freely, year-round as the law allows.

For more information: http://www.blm.gov/nv/st/en/fo/carson_city_field.html

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