

KIGER/RIDDLE MOUNTAIN WILD HORSE GATHER

Questions & Answers

**last updated July 5, 2011*

These horses are being gathered too near the foaling season. Can the gather be delayed?

The peak of foaling for wild horse herds on public lands in the West falls within about a two week period, from mid-April to mid-May. It is the BLM's policy to prohibit the use of helicopters to assist in the capture of wild horses the six weeks before and the six weeks that follow the peak of foaling. Therefore, the use of helicopters to capture wild horses is prohibited from March 1 until June 30, unless an emergency situation occurs. Due to the fact that some foals may birth outside of the foaling period, and because there are many herds in the western United States to gather each year, there simply isn't a time to complete a gather that will avoid all foals.

Can the mare/foal pairs and heavily pregnant mares be excluded from this gather?

BLM employees have observed horses in the Herd Management Area within the last two weeks and are aware of the younger foals and pregnant mares. Mare/foal pairs and pregnant mares will be included in the gather. The agency and the contractor take every precaution in providing for the safe travel of these, and all horses during the gather process. Each situation is evaluated case-by-case to determine whether or not the horse(s) is capable of and willing to make the journey. If the mare/foal pairs or pregnant mares are not, they will be separated from the group.

How far will the horses travel to the capture site?

Most capture sites in the Kiger/Riddle Mountain gather are 1-3 miles from the majority of the horses in that particular area. The agency and the contractor use as many capture sites as necessary to provide the shortest and easiest travel distances and routes. The Herd Management Area is quite small and within the last two weeks, the horses are reported to be gathering in larger groups of multiple bands in the lowlands. These circumstances make it easier and more efficient to move the horses a shorter distance to a capture site.

Will there be a viewing opportunity at every capture site?

There will be viewing at capture sites that allow for a safe opportunity for the horses, public, BLM employees, contractors and crew, and the gather operation. Federal Aviation Requirements will be a determining factor in the location and/or availability of observation sites.

Will there be observation at the temporary holding facility?

There will be viewing at the temporary holding facility at a location determined safe and undistruptive by the contractor.

With the popularity of the Kiger and Riddle Mountain horses, why are geldings being released back into the Herd Management Areas?

The Decision Record selected to implement the Proposed Action analyzed in DOI-BLM-B050-2011-006-EA included returning 11 geldings to Kiger and Riddle Mountain HMA's following the gather. However, since issuing the Decision Record, Burns District BLM has decided not to geld or release any geldings to either HMA. The post-gather population of horses within both HMA's would be composed of approximately 87 wild horses (43 mares and 44 studs). This will maintain a 50/50 sex ratio of horses following the gather.