



# United States Department of the Interior



## BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

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IN REPLY REFER TO:  
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## Mining Claim Monument Concerns Wildlife

If you used PVC or steel pipes and left the pipes open at the top to mark your mining claim corners and /or the length and width of your mining claims, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Utah would like to make you aware of a potential wildlife safety issue. The PVC and to a lesser extent, metal pipes, are often seen by birds as a hollow suitable for nesting. After perching on the pipes, the birds then enter the hole only to become trapped because the walls of the pipes do not allow them to extend their wings and fly out and are too smooth to allow them to climb their way up the sides. As a result they die from dehydration or starvation. Other animals such as lizards also meet the same fate. Any open top vertical pipe can be a death trap to birds and other wildlife.

**Why should you be concerned?** Loss of any wildlife categorized as listed or sensitive should be of concern to all of us particularly when it can be so easily prevented. In addition, if the wildlife (birds, reptiles, small mammals) found dead in your mining claim marker is a threatened or endangered species, this would be in violation of the Surface Management (43 CFR 3809) regulations because you would have caused “unnecessary or undue degradation.” You may also be subject to additional penalties under the Endangered Species Act.

This is a widespread problem. A study in California found that there were the remains of over two hundred birds in one pipe (see enclosure entitled Bird Death Pipes). **You can help solve this problem with little cost and effort. Please consider one of the following options:**

- **Replace the pipe with a closed top pipe or solid marker.**
- **Cap or fill pipes that can't be removed** – cap claim markers or fill them with sand or rocks or cap with a large well-fitted rock. PVC caps can get knocked off or don't hold up to the elements. Make certain that caps are permanent.

The BLM Utah is asking for your help to solve this problem. An examination of 854 pipes in Nevada revealed 879 dead birds (as well as 113 reptiles and 20 mammals) which is an average of more than one bird mortality per pipe. Given this information, Utah could also be facing the same problem with its mining claim markers.

Thank you for your cooperation.