

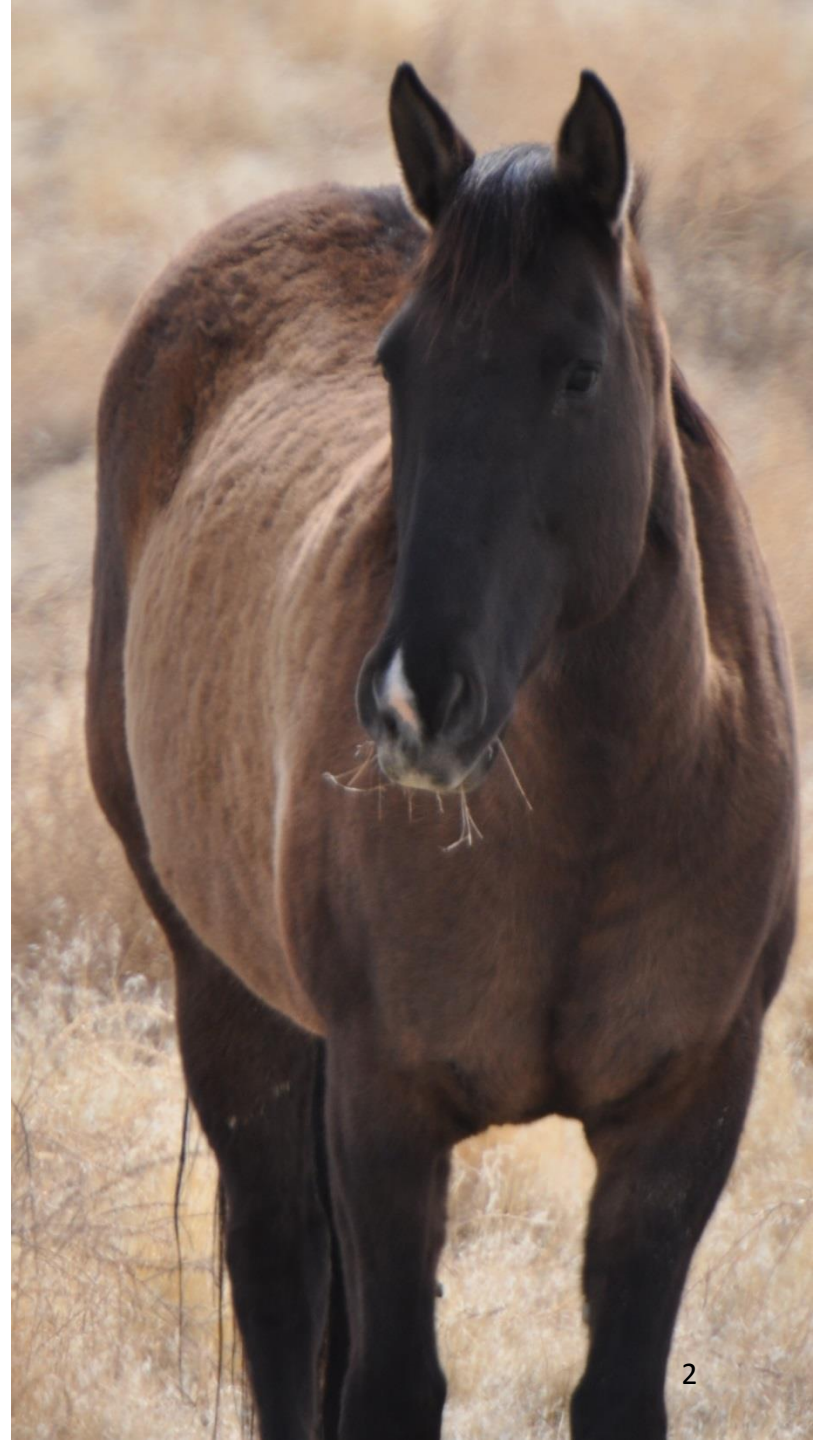


On-Range Operations Branch Update Advisory Board Meeting – Redmond, Oregon April 14

**Bryan K Fuell
On-Range Branch Chief
National Wild Horse and Burro Program**

On-Range Operations Branch

- **FY16 Population Estimates**
- **Gather, Removals and Fertility Control**
- **Sage Grouse**
- **Litigation**



Wild Horse and Burro On-Range Statistics

Estimated wild horse and burro on-range population (as of March 1, 2015): **58,150**

National appropriate management level for wild horses and burros: **26,715**

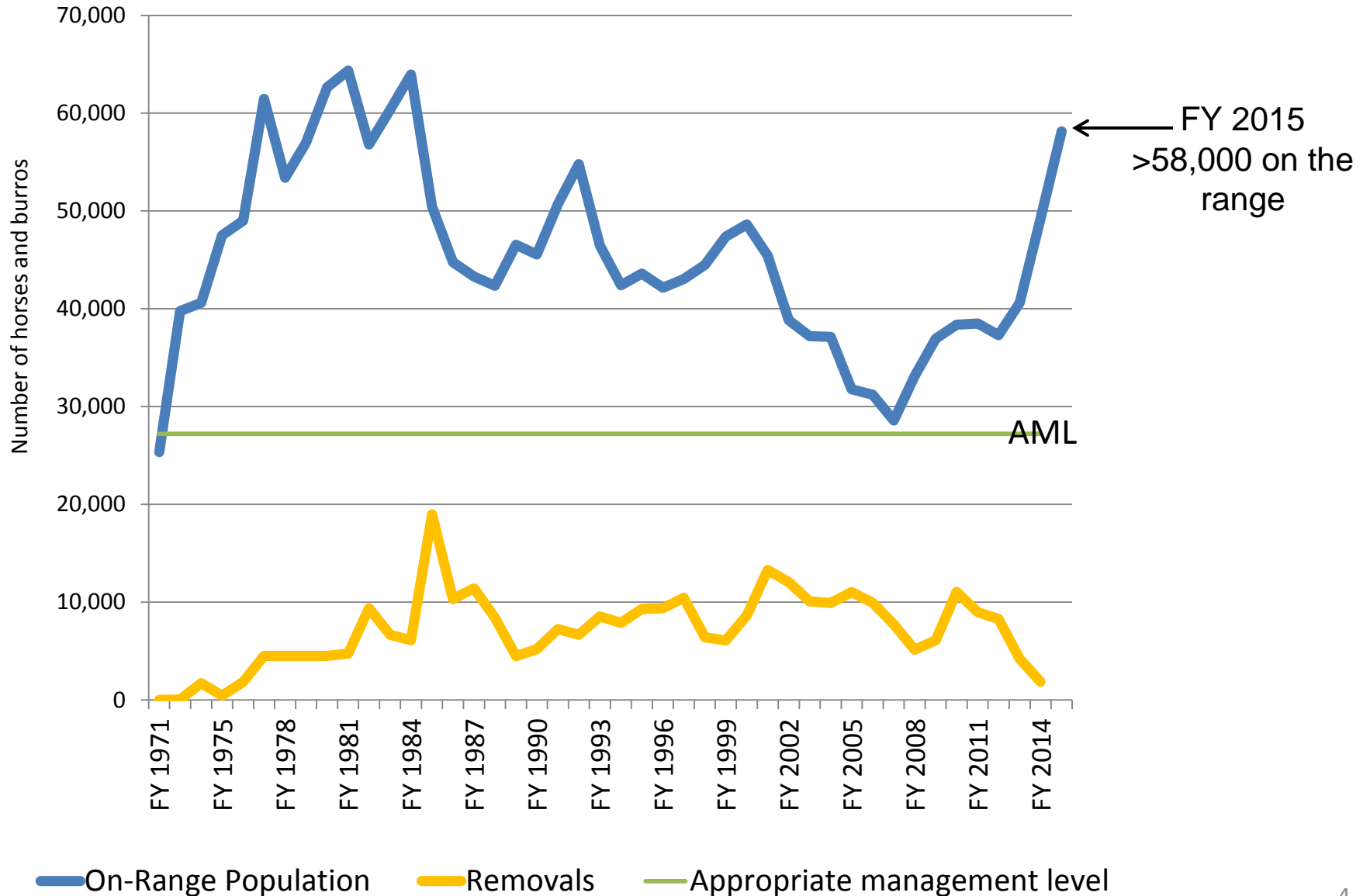
Total number of animals removed from the range in FY15: **3,819**

Total wild horses treated with fertility control vaccines in FY15: **469**



Statistics and Trends

On-Range Population and Removals



Wild Horse and Burro FY16 Gathers and Removals

Limited adoptions and budget has impacted gather capabilities

Maximum annual removals = approximately 3,500

Total planned removals in FY16 = approximately 3,500

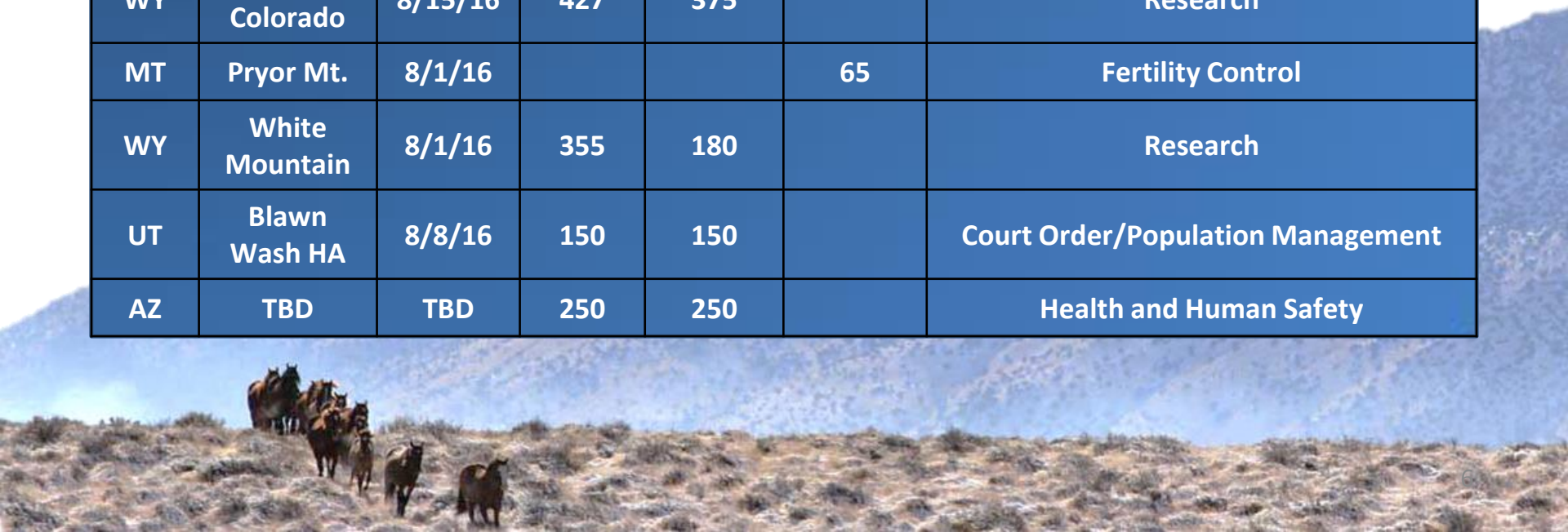
FY16 Gather Priorities:

- Public health and safety (animals on the highway, etc.)
- Encroachment onto private land
- In Greater Sage-Grouse Focal Areas
- Research
- Court orders
- Land or animal health emergencies

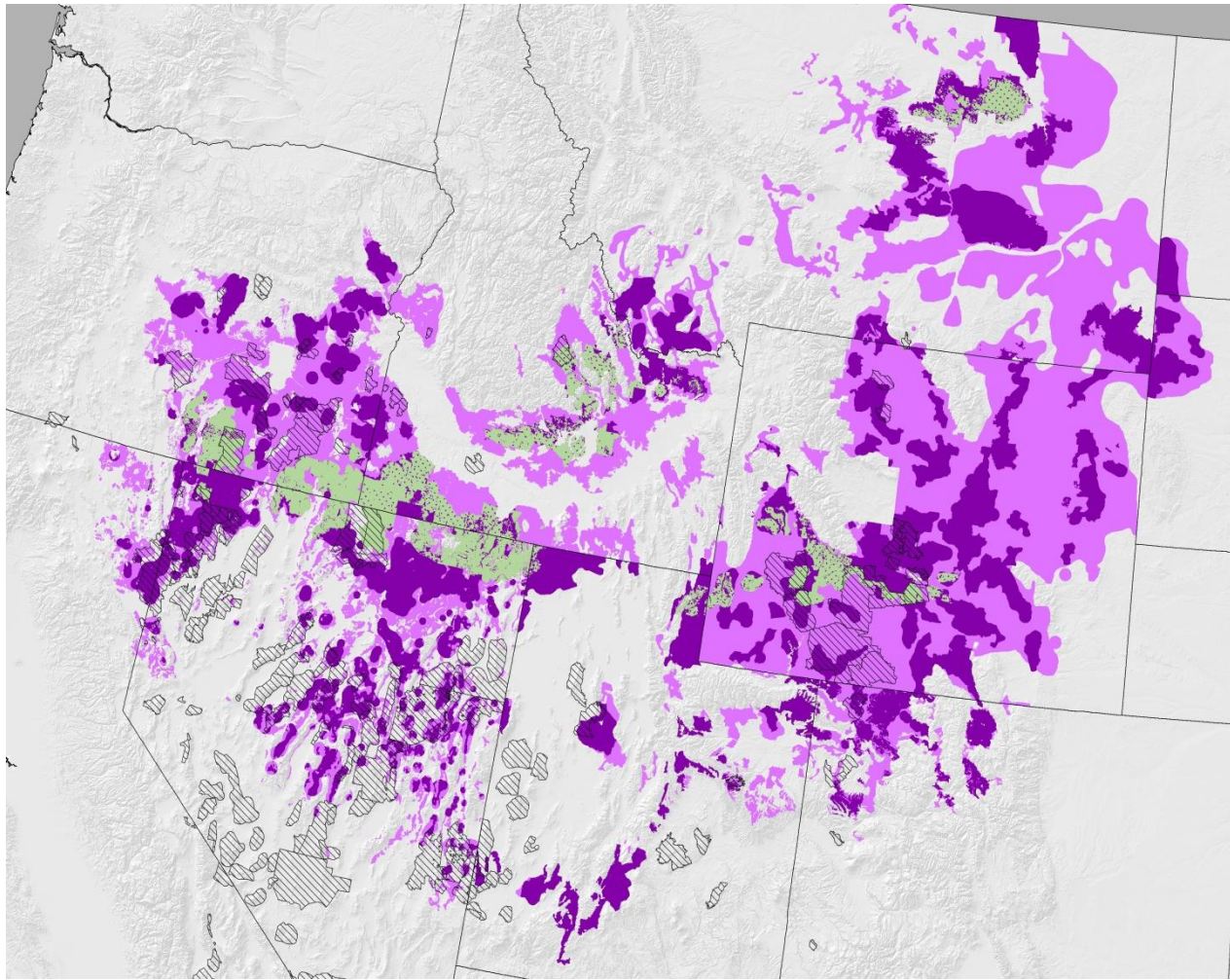


Planned Upcoming FY16 Gathers

| State | HMA | Start Date | Gather | Remove | Fertility Control | Purpose |
|-------|-------------------|------------|--------|--------|-------------------|--|
| UT | Sinbad | 4/11/16 | 74 | 28 | | Research |
| NV | Outside Red Rocks | 4/1/16 | 40 | 40 | | Private Property/Health and Human Safety |
| NV | Outside Johnnie | 4/1/16 | 40 | 40 | | Private Property/Health and Human Safety |
| UT | Conger | 7/1/16 | 150 | 97 | | Research |
| UT | Frisco | 7/1/16 | 150 | 85 | | Research |
| WY | Little Colorado | 8/15/16 | 427 | 375 | | Research |
| MT | Pryor Mt. | 8/1/16 | | | 65 | Fertility Control |
| WY | White Mountain | 8/1/16 | 355 | 180 | | Research |
| UT | Blawn Wash HA | 8/8/16 | 150 | 150 | | Court Order/Population Management |
| AZ | TBD | TBD | 250 | 250 | | Health and Human Safety |



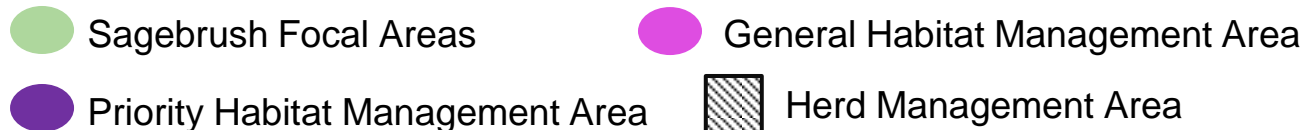
Greater Sage-Grouse Habitat



While not listed as endangered, a large-scale recovery effort is needed and is underway

Removing excess horses is part of that effort

106 HMAs containing SFA, PHMA and GHMA



Greater Sage-Grouse Habitat

106 HMA with 21 M total acres

Greater Sage Grouse and Wild Horses and Burros

| Type | # HMAs | Acres of Habitat | Estimated WHB population | Total removals to reach AML |
|--------------|------------|-------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| SFA | 22 | 2 million | 7,364 | 4,563 |
| PHMA | 66 | 6.5 million | 26,408 | 18,561 |
| GHMA | 18 | 6.5 million | 3,836 | 2,117 |
| TOTAL | 106 | 15 million | 37,608 | 25,241 |



Planned Removals in Greater Sage-Grouse Habitat

Tentative 5-year Gather Plan

| Category | States | HMA | SFA/PHMA Acres | Planned Removed/Fertility Control |
|--------------|-----------------|--|---|-----------------------------------|
| FY16 | OR, UT, WY | Beaty Butte, White Mountain, Little Colorado | 617,000 SFA | 1,920 |
| FY17 | WY | Divide Basin, Salt Wells, Adobe Town | 100,000 SFA 819,000 PHMA | 1,900 |
| FY18 | WY | Red Desert Complex | 890,000 SFA | 2,450 |
| FY19 | NV | Owyhee Complex | 292,000 SFA 155,000 PHMA | 2,100 |
| FY20 | WY, CA, ID | Lander Complex, Nut Mountain, Bitner, Massacre Lake, Challis | 491,000 SFA | 1,750 |
| TOTAL | 5 States | 24 HMA | 2,390,000 SFA 974,000 PHMA | 10,120 |

With current level of funding, BLM could reach AML in HMA with SFA by 2020

Greater Sage-Grouse Habitat

Current and Projected Horse Populations by Habitat Classifications
Population and Projected Growth with no intervention(17.5% growth)

| Category | # HMAs | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 |
|-----------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| HMA w/SFA | 22 | 6,605 | 7,760 | 9,119 | 10,714 | 12,589 |
| HMA w/PHMA | 66 | 27,221 | 31,985 | 37,582 | 44,159 | 51,887 |
| HMA w/GHMA only | 18 | 4,333 | 5,092 | 5,983 | 7,030 | 8,260 |
| TOTAL | 106 | 38,159 | 44,837 | 52,684 | 61,903 | 72,736 |



Bi-State Sage Grouse

- In April, 2015 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced decision not to list bi-state sage grouse under Endangered Species Act based on the success of voluntary conservation efforts to recover this species and its habitat.
- Crucial Habitat – Distinct Population Segments (DPS)
- ROD September 2015

Bi-State Sage Grouse and Wild Horses and Burros
 8 HMAs in planning unit but only 5 with Habitat

| # HMAs | Acres | Acres DPS | Estimated WHB population | Total removals to reach AML |
|--------|-------|-----------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 5* | 890K | 63K | 922 | 640 |

*In addition, there are two USFS territories with DPS habitat.

Litigation

- 17+ cases
- 1 case -- Use of prescribed fire in a herd management area
- 3 cases -- Use of fertility control vaccines or non-reproducing herd segments to control population growth
- 6 cases -- Alleged violations of Wild Free Roaming Horses and Burros Act or the National Environmental Policy Act
- 7 cases -- Failure to remove excess wild horses or burros



Questions?



Photo: John Wheland

