

RIDGECREST FIELD OFFICE
CALIFORNIA DESERT DISTRICT'S WILD BURRO MANAGEMENT REPORT
CALIFORNIA DESERT MANAGER'S GROUP MEETING
October - 2003

BLM Action:

1. Remove 550 burros and 70 horses from the California desert and placed into the BLM's National Adoption Program (As identified in the Desert Manager's Group Annual Operating Plan for the Management of Wild Burros). These 620 animals will be removed throughout the year, so not to overflow the adoption system at any one time.
2. BLM and California Fish & Game have radio collared and are tracking burros and deer along the lower Colorado River, within the Picacho and Chocolate-Mule Mountain Herd Management Areas (HMAs). The objective of this cooperative effort is to collect data on the migratory patterns of these two animals to better understand their movement patterns and relationship. This is a long-term study, tracking 25 burro's location weekly for 5 years. During this period, BLM and California Fish & Game are collecting vegetation production, composition data, as well as grazing use levels.
3. Conduct riparian and rangeland health monitoring within the remaining HMAs, and along common administrative boundaries where burro management occurs.

Status: Efforts to date have been focused on completing the necessary documents to conduct this year's removals. Annual vegetative monitoring has occurred in the Picacho and Chocolate-Mule Mountain HMAs, and also within the Chemehuevi HMA.

MANAGEMENT: BLM and the California Fish & Game are two years in a five-year migration study to monitor the seasonal movements of both burros and deer within the Picacho Herd Area complex. BLM has monitored habitat within the Picacho and Chocolate-Mule Mountains HMAs as well as within the Chemehuevi HMA. El Centro Field office is completing NEPA review for proposed range developments to discourage burros from moving onto Picacho State Park lands.

El Centro Field Office has signed an Interagency Agreement with BLM, Yuma Field Office and Picacho State Park for the long-term management and removal of wild burros occupying state park lands, along the Lower Colorado River. Under this agreement, the California State Park would bait trap burros and hold them for BLM to transport to Ridgecrest corrals for placement into the national adoption program. These cooperating agencies will also share in the collection of habitat monitoring data, and the development of range improvements designed to redirect animals away from state park resources.

Ridgecrest Field Office signed an Interagency Agreement with Naval Weapons Station at China Lake, for the long term management of wild horses and burros occurring on adjacent lands. The two agencies will share the cost of management, removals and placement of animals into private ownership. This agreement also provides substantial support to the operation of the Ridgecrest Corrals by supplying water and power to the facility.

REMOVALS: BLM has worked with several cooperators to water trap burros from the Clark Mountains and along the Colorado River, at Park Moab and within the Picacho State Park. This fiscal year, 473 burros and 39 horses have been removed from the following areas:

- 224 from Chemehuevi HMA
- 58 from Clark Mountains
- 20 from Panamint Mountains,
- 73 from Centennial Range
- 70 from Slate Range
- 39 horses from Mt Powell Territory, and
- 24 burros from outside HMAs.

ADOPTIONS: Approximately 320 wild horses and burros have been adopted so far this fiscal year within the California Desert district. 228 animals from the Ridgecrest corrals and 92 from one satellite adoptions held in Norco California. Animals continue to be adopted at the Ridgecrest Corrals, all year long. BLM continues to accept into their adoption program at no cost to NPS all burros captured by NPS.

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