

# Equine groups call for suspension of BLM helicopter roundups of wild horses during Western heatwave

*Forecasts call for temperatures in the Antelope Complex area to be in the high 90's through the weekend.*

NEVADA, UNITED STATES, July 13, 2023

/EINPresswire.com/ -- As Western states brace for a searing summer heatwave, three advocacy groups, [Animal Wellness Action](#), [The Wild Beauty Foundation](#), and [Advocates for Wild Equines](#), called on the Bureau of

Land Management to suspend its ongoing helicopter roundup operations

in Nevada, citing threats to the health and safety of mustangs being targeted by the agency for removal from their rangeland homes.



BLM Roundup

The BLM is currently targeting more than 3,000 wild horses of the vast Antelope Complex in

Nevada in a roundup operation that began July 9 and involves two separate helicopters. According to the BLM's daily gather reports from the operation, two horses have already lost their lives in the operation; a foal died of colic after arriving at the holding facility, while a 4-year-old mare broke her neck while being stampeded into the agency's traps.

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*Scott Beckstead*

“If the BLM is serious about adhering to its own animal welfare rules, it will immediately suspend its operations in the Antelope Complex until the weather turns and temperatures drop,” said Scott Beckstead, director of

campaigns for Animal Wellness Action and an equine welfare specialist. “Chasing these animals, including foals, heavily pregnant mares, and elderly animals, through extreme heat will inevitably lead to their suffering and deaths. We call on the BLM to do the right thing and ground the

helicopters until conditions improve.”

The BLM claims to adhere to its Comprehensive Animal Welfare Program (CAWP) in its wild horse and burro operations. Because the CAWP is a set of voluntary guidelines and is not legally enforceable, abiding by those guidelines is a matter of agency discretion. Public observers of the BLM’s operations, including the helicopter operations and conditions inside the agency’s holding facilities, have shown that CAWP violations are a routine occurrence, despite agency assurances to the contrary.

The CAWP addresses conducting wild horse and burro gather operations in extreme temperatures where stating, “Horse captures must not be conducted when ambient temperature at the trap site is below 10°F or above 95°F without approval of the Lead COR/COR/PI. Burro captures must not be conducted when ambient temperature is below 10°F or above 100°F without approval of the Lead COR/COR/PI. The Lead COR/COR/PI will not approve captures when the ambient temperature exceeds 105 °F. (major).” Forecasts call for temperatures in the Antelope Complex area to be in the high 90’s over through the weekend.

“Having spent years documenting wild horse roundups, which are at their very core cruel and antiquated practices, the idea of forcing terrified wild horses to run in extreme heat is the definition of animal cruelty,” said Ashley Avis, president and founder of The Wild Beauty Foundation. “If the Bureau of Land Management proceeds with rounding up horses at these temperatures, it only reinforces the carelessness, mismanagement, and disturbing ethos of the agency – clearly opting to prioritize the financial interests of the helicopter contractors over animal welfare. I hope the BLM does the right thing and immediately suspends these operations.”

Video of the operations posted by wild horse advocacy groups monitoring the Antelope Complex operations have documented terrified horses desperately trying to escape the helicopters and the traps, with stallions somersaulting over fence panels and mares desperately trying to return to foals that have fallen behind in the stampede. The distress experienced by the horses while they are chased by the helicopters would be compounded by extreme heat and will inevitably lead to more deaths.

“Advocates for Wild Equines National is opposed to wild horse and burro roundups, but especially summer roundups altogether,” said Britta Starke, legislative liaison for Advocates for Wild Equines. “As it relates to summer roundups, the scientific data is clear that horses can die from the combined effects of sustained exertion and high temperatures, and therefore any roundup scheduled during extreme summer temperatures should be suspended or canceled. Any injury or death to a horse should be considered a major CAWP violation and grounds for investigation of the BLM by an outside source.”

ABOUT

Animal Wellness Action (Action) is a Washington, D.C.-based 501(c)(4) organization with a mission of helping animals by promoting legal standards forbidding cruelty and to encourage enforcement of our laws. We believe helping animals helps us all.

The Center for a Humane Economy (“the Center”) is a non-profit organization that focuses on influencing businesses to pay attention to animal cruelty in their operations and to eliminate harmful practices. We believe helping animals helps us all.

The Wild Beauty Foundation is a 501c3 nonprofit organization dedicated to illuminating key issues wild and domestic horses are facing today through film, education, advocacy, and rescue. WBF recently co-produced the award-winning documentary, Wild Beauty: Mustang Spirit of the West, which debuted to the public in May 2023.

Advocates for Wild Equines was founded in September 2021 and seeks to bring together people from diverse backgrounds and with various interests including, wild horse and burro protection, preservation of public lands, wild-equine rescue, and climate change. Our grassroots coalition of individuals and organizations welcomes all who share our vision of ending roundups and equine slaughter, as well as rewilding all horses and burros currently being warehoused in holding pens by the U.S. Bureau of Land Management.

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