

New Rules For Wild Horse Roundups May Not Help Horses

The 2026 roundups of America's wild horses are exposing changes in policy and practice that affect the care of the horses and raise objections from advocates

COLDEN, NY, UNITED STATES, August 23, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- There are noticeable changes in Bureau of Land Management (BLM) policy where it applies to the 2026 wild horse and burro roundups or gathers as the BLM refers to them.

The records below, taken directly from the BLM website (www.blm.gov) daily gather reports show that the people reporting on the gathers do not properly distinguish the difference between a filly and a mare, as can be seen in the copy and paste of the daily gather reports. "It may seem an insignificant detail, defining filly as a female horse under the age of 4 years but it indicates a lack of general knowledge that should be a qualification for the other decisions that these employees are expected to make". said Equine Collaborative International's, Barbara Moore.

Saturday/Sunday- July 25/26

Deaths: 1

- Sudden / Acute: 1

7 m/o, bay, mare- Died/Unexpected, Undiagnosed

Wednesday, July 22

Deaths: 2

- Sudden / Acute: 2

3 y/o, Bay, mare, died, traumatic head injury

Taken from the Bureau of Land Management Website:

Guidance for Selling Wild Horses and Burros

Sale-Eligibility Criteria

Congress has directed that any excess animal more than ten years of age or that has been offered unsuccessfully for adoption at least three times shall be sold. [Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act of 1971, Pub.L. 92-195, §1333(e) (2004)] While sale-eligible animals may also be adopted, animals that meet the sales criteria must be made available for purchase. Animals become "sale-eligible" because of their age or the number of times offered unsuccessfully for adoption at adoption events, regardless of age.

1. Horse or burro that becomes 11 years of age as of January 1 [Example: Animals born in 2002 are sale-eligible on January 1, 2013], or

2. Horse or burro that has been offered unsuccessfully for adoption at three adoption events, as defined below:

a. Satellite Adoption Event: An organized event that is advertised and held at a location other than a Bureau of Land Management (BLM) preparation, maintenance or training facility by the BLM or a partner.

b. National Internet Adoption Event: Animals offered for adoption through the national internet adoption site.

c. Facility Internet Adoption Event: Animals offered on the facility adoption website for a minimum of seven continuous days.

d. Facility Satellite Adoption Event: A specific group of animals advertised and offered at a BLM facility for a minimum of one day.

Number of times offered for adoption: This is a count of the number of adoption events that an animal has been offered for adoption. Each adoption event will count as one time, no matter how many days the event lasted or the number of times competitive bidding was conducted during a multi-day adoption event.

A sale-eligible animal must also meet the following criteria:

a. Has a Hannake body condition score of three or greater;

b. Has vision in at least one eye;

c. Is able to bear weight on four legs; and

d. Meets the requirements for a valid health certificate.

Photo #1

2 y/o, Bay, mare, died, undiagnosed

Tuesday, July 21

Deaths: 1

- Sudden / Acute: 1

3 m/o, Bay, mare - Died: chronic, undiagnosed/Unknown

Sunday, July 19

Deaths: 1

- Sudden / Acute: 1

3 m/o, Bay mare, died unexpected, undiagnosed

Friday, July 17

Deaths: 1

- Pre-existing / Chronic: 1

3 m/o, Bay Mare, Chronic/Pre-existing, respiratory infection

Saturday, July 11

Deaths: 2

- Sudden / Acute: 2

3 y/o, Bay, Mare - Acute/Sudden, broken neck

3 m/o, Sorrel, filly - Acute/Sudden, indicators consistent with colic

Friday, July 10

Deaths: 1

- Sudden / Acute: 1

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With all these facts exposed, advocates recognize that America's wild horse and burro populations are being pushed toward extinction by the very agency that is assigned to protect them.”

Barbara Moore

Proposed Gathers FY26 July 1, 2026 - September 30, 2026													
NV	Callaghan Complex (North Shoshone HA South Shoshone HMA, Bald Mountain, Callaghan HMA)	7/10/2026	8/31/2026	2,000	2,000				Drive Trap	Horse		AML	Progress Toward AML
NV	Lake Lahontan HMA	7/20/2026	7/30/2026	700	700				Drive Trap	Horse		AML	Progress Toward AML
ID	Saylor Creek HMA	7/10/2026	7/17/2026	150	105	22			Drive Trap	Horse		AML	Achieve AML
NV	Moriah HA	7/27/2026	8/13/2026	500	500				Drive Trap	Horse		AML	Progress Toward AML
CO	Pioche-East Douglas HMA, North Pioche HA	8/1/2026	8/31/2026	925	911	10	14		Drive Trap	Horse		AML	Achieve AML
CO	West Douglas HA	8/1/2026	8/31/2026	100	100				Drive Trap	Horse		AML	Achieve AML
UT	Bible Springs Complex (Bible Spring HMA, Four Mile HMA, Tilly Creek HMAs and Black Wash HA)	8/1/2026	8/22/2026	800	800				Drive Trap	Horse		AML	Progress Toward AML
UT	Confusion HMA	8/23/2026	8/31/2026	360	360				Drive Trap	Horse		AML	Progress Toward AML
CA	Carter Reservoir HMA	9/1/2026	9/30/2026	470	455	15			Drive Trap	Horse	TBD	AML	Achieve AML
CA	Buckhorn HMA	9/1/2026	9/30/2026	273	214	59			Drive Trap	Horse	TBD	AML	Achieve AML
CA	Coppersmith Mountains HMA	9/1/2026	9/30/2026	113	63	50			Drive Trap	Horse	TBD	AML	Achieve AML
CA	Nut Mountain HMA	9/1/2026	9/30/2026	78	48	30			Drive Trap	Horse	TBD	AML	Achieve AML
CA	Bitner HMA	9/1/2026	9/30/2026	86	71	15			Drive Trap	Horse	TBD	AML	Achieve AML
CA	Massacre Lakes HMA	9/1/2026	9/30/2026	57	32				Drive Trap	Horse		AML	Achieve AML
ID	Challis HMA	9/10/2026	9/17/2026	285	172	45			Drive Trap	Horse		AML	Achieve AML
CO	Sand Wash Basin HMA	9/10/2026	9/30/2026	300	245	20	55		Drive Trap	Horses		AML	Progress Toward AML
WY	Fifteenmile HMA	9/15/2026	9/30/2026	386	286		100		Drive Trap	Horse		AML	Achieve AML
NV	Jackson Mountains HMA	9/20/2026	9/30/2026	500	500				Drive Trap	Horse		AML	Progress Toward AML
Planned Gathers Totals				8,683	7,962	266	169						
Total Including All Operations				14,517	13,996	1,284	169						

Photo#2



Heather Hellyer photograph of designated observation area at BLM wild horse roundup. Distant trucks are near trap that horses are chased into by helicopters.

Sorrel, filly, <6 months, Acute/Sudden, Euthanized, kicked in holding resulting in broken leg.

The daily observation at roundups is now being limited during some roundups. Not just by the distance and inconvenience of placement that they have explained by saying the locations were chosen for public safety reasons. Now the BLM is limiting the number of days, in some cases, to just 3 days per week, during the roundup that interested parties can attend and see the roundup procedure. BLM claiming that they do not have enough

employees to place one at the observation point. Roundups are occurring on public land where observers have every right to be, especially in light of the fact that the horses are owned by the citizens who want to observe and record the goings on at the roundup. Lifelong horsewoman and advocate, Phyllis Jensen stated, "I believe, as an owner of America's wild horses and public lands that we have the constitutional right to have observers at roundups. Infringement on both 1st and 14th Amendment rights is evident."

Insufficient staff is the excuse that's given as a reason that they cannot support daily observation. An armed BLM guard is assigned to the observation area to limit the attending individuals from moving outside the assigned viewing area. The questions we hear from advocates include but are not limited to:

- If staffing is so limited is there enough staff to maximize safety at the roundup?
- Would there be more staff members available if the roundups were not being scheduled to be conducted simultaneously?

Transparency and truth have been requested and demanded by equine advocates for years. Instead of truth we see adjusted numbers, horses that go to holding are not accounted for, and animals treated in negligent fashion even when there are observers present to report it. Reports from observers include roundups continuing when the:

- Ambient temperature is named, but not the heat index is in the danger zone
- Air quality index is listed as dangerous due to wildfire smoke
- Though roundups are prohibited during foaling season, young foals that cannot keep up with bands being chased by helicopters and are left behind or are run to the point that they die (sometimes undiagnosed, sometimes attributed to colic, chronic lameness or capture myopathy)

Some of the problems that could be fixed easily if safety for the horses were a priority:

- The roundups are rushed so that horses are crammed into small holding pens and the speed at which they are chased and overcrowding result in more injuries such as broken necks from hitting fences and broken legs from kicks
- Horses are not provided with shade protection even though it is required to qualify as an adopter.
- Horses are not provided with electrolytes after high heat, long distance chases and harassment by helicopters.

"It concerns me that without observation, more guidelines and health recommendations could be overlooked," said Jensen.

The absence of an on-sight veterinarian is another changed circumstance. Decisions to end lives are being made by people who do not even follow the guidelines of their own organization. It is clearly stated in this BLM Document (see photo #1) that, in order to be eligible for sale, horses must have at least 1 eye. Again, copied and pasted from the BLM website, a gather report from the recent Callaghan Gather, daily report for July 16, 2026 indicates that 2 horses were killed

because they were missing an eye.

Thursday, July 16

Deaths: 2

- Pre-existing / Chronic: 2

10 y/o, Bay, stud, Chronic/Pre-existing, missing and eye

3 y/o , Bay, stud, Chronic/Pre-existing, missing an eye.

Scheduling roundups (see photo #2) to overlap each other limits observation as the number of properly trained observers with proper photographic and/or video equipment is limited and it stretches the BLM schedule so that observation can be cancelled because they do not have sufficient staff.

Moore added, "With all these facts exposed, advocates recognize that America's wild horse and burro populations are being pushed toward extinction by the very agency that is assigned to protect them. We suggest you engage with your Congresspersons and Senators, present the facts and let them know that preserving these iconic animals is important to you as the owner of the wild ones and the public land that supports them".

Barbara Moore and Phyllis Jensen

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