

BLM Advisory Board Meeting January 8, 2025

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During the last 2 board meetings I discussed the deaths of pregnant captured jennies – all confirmed to have been in good health—a direct result of the stress physical exertion and associated complications experienced during and after capture.

Burros are not as athletic as horses – they tend to freeze and assess a situation rather than immediately fleeing. They constantly try to conserve energy. Helicopter roundups force burros to make unnatural, abrupt changes in the normal intensity of their exercise. During roundups in large HMAs or Complexes they are driven longer distances by helicopters. Many are aggressively pursued and roped by wranglers.

Imagine forcing a person who rarely exercises to run miles and then lift a few heavy weights? Afterwards they will most likely experience sore muscles, a pulled ligament or will be limping from the pain. A burro showing these signs might end up being euthanized at trap or shortly afterwards in holding.

These capture related stressors lead to both Hyperlipidemia and capture myopathy – a cause of morbidity widely recognized in the wildlife world - involve too much fat circulating, and causing obstructions, in the bloodstream clogging organs and damaging muscles - especially heart muscles that can lead to a heart attack. While hyperlipidemia may get listed as a cause of death capture myopathy is never acknowledged. Because necropsies are needed to confirm deaths from these ailments cause is often listed as pre-existing, foaling complication, undiagnosed, lameness, colic, old age, other or simply found dead - a common cause listed by adopters.

Both illnesses can manifest and cause death, after the initial event - often triggered by further stress or another illness.

I personally rescued a wild burro who got an eye infection and, despite antibiotics, and dropped dead in front of my eyes. My vet cited a heart attack as the cause.

Both Hyperlipidemia and capture myopathy are gather related and resulting deaths should be recorded as such in the database and in gather mortality statistics as they do with other wildlife.

FOIAs covering the first 60 days after capture revealed:

After 2022 Blue Wing roundup 6.7% of jennies captured died from hyperlipidemia

After the 2024 roundup this number doubled to 12.24%

This roundup of 352 burros was conducted despite a 2023 estimated pop at only 476 with no follow up aerial count done after the 2022 roundup. AML on over 2 mil acres is 50-90 burros

1. Despite 2020 board recommendations BLM continues to manage burros like horses with AZ, to the best of their ability, appears to be the exception.
2. Off-range reports should decipher horse and burro data – especially since there are no recognized off-range pastures for burros
3. Five new public-private partnership agreements did not include any specific to burros
4. The only place "burro" appeared under Current Research projects was horse and burro genetic monitoring.
5. Mountain Lion predation, despite being acknowledged during the Pop Equus discussion - stating up to 50% of foals have been taken by lions - no BLM funding was provided for research. It has not been included as a parameter input in pop Equus model. Many HMAs - especially burros - have a lion population.
6. Wildlife populations – including mule deer and elk - are declining nationwide – in areas with no wild horses or burros. If foals are a part of the lion's diet how will the mass removals further impact deer and elk populations?
7. PopEquus was designed for horses with no parameter's inputs for burros.
8. Foals born in holding must be accounted for - as captured foals are - when estimating the following years annual pop on 3/1 as they were initially included in the prior year's estimate as a "foal yet to be born"
9. Will one of the 2 HMAs to be evaluated " be burros?
10. The 1982 Big Sandy - located in Arizona - HMAP acknowledged burros digging numerous wells used by all wildlife and birds - contaminated river water was found to be a reason. It was also noted burros spent little time around water sources - rarely even entering shallow areas.

11. FOIAs reveal a pattern of large percentages of repeat adopters adopting the max and further being approved despite having untitled animals on the property, burros that have died, photos showing burros in poor condition, and no compliance checks.

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