

Comprehensive Animal Welfare Program Team Assessment Report

November 18, 2024

Gather Name: Buffalo Hills Complex Wild Horse and Burro Gather

State: Nevada

District/Field Office: Winnemucca District/Black Rock Field Office

Incident Commander: Garrett Swisher

Lead COR: Garrett Swisher

Gather Method: Helicopter Drive Trapping

CAWP Assessment Team Members: Jerrie Bertola, Tami Howell, and Lisa Reid

Assessment Dates: November 16-18, 2024

Total Number of CAWP Gather Standards: 206

Number of Applicable CAWP Gather Standards: 120

Compliance with Applicable CAWP Standards: 119

Compliance with Applicable CAWP Standards: 119/120 = 99%

Understanding Assessments: The Comprehensive Animal Welfare Program aims to promote the welfare of wild horses and burros during management activities while minimizing stress and ensuring humane care, handling and treatment. CAWP assessments evaluate compliance with standards during the activities taking place at the time of the assessment. This framework helps ensure a clear and unbiased evaluation of events or actions as they occur. Here are some key points:

- **Holistic Approach:** Assessments reflect the entirety of the activity, not targeting individuals or specific groups.
- **Time-Specific:** The evaluation focuses solely on the observed circumstances during the assessment period.
- **Limitations:** Previous or subsequent events are not accounted for, meaning the assessment is a standalone observation.

General Notes from the CAWP Team at the Buffalo Hills Complex Wild Horse and Burro Gather: Coordination and Communication

- **Gather Team Collaboration:** There was excellent cooperation among the gather team, which included staff from BLM, APHIS, and contractors.
- **Knowledge of Standards:** The gather team was knowledgeable about the CAWP standards.

Gather Techniques

- **Pressure and Release:** There was effective use of pressure and release techniques while guiding wild horses to the trap.

Decision Making

- Roping Consideration: Roping of wild horses was tried two times. The wild horses were located outside the herd management area boundaries, in an area that is not identified for the management of wild horses.
- Outcome: The roping of one mare was successful while following the standards for roping. The mare was not tied down or in a recumbent position during the roping operation. The mare was marked for identification, loaded in the horse trailer and transported to temporary holding. The mare was evaluated by the onsite veterinarian at the trap and again at temporary holding. The second attempt at roping was not successful and the wild horse evaded capture.

Conditions found to be in non-compliance with the CAWP Standards for Wild Horse and Burro Gatherers:

Trap Site

Wild Horse and Burro Care Standard

III.B.3.a Dependent foals or weak/debilitated animals must be separated from other WH&Bs at the trap site to avoid injuries during transportation to the temporary holding facility. Separation of dependent foals from mares must not exceed four hours unless the Lead COR/COR/PI authorizes a longer time or a decision is made to wean the foals.

Non-Compliance: When transporting wild horses from the trap to temporary holding, three foals that were determined to be weaned were shipped in a compartment with a stallion wild horse.

Table 1: Overall Summary Rating Buffalo Hills Wild Horse Gather

	Total Numbers	Percent Compliant	Rating
Trap Site	59/60	98%	Excellent
Temporary Holding	60/60	100%	Excellent
Transportation	---	---	Not Assessed
Gather Compliance	119/120	99%	Excellent

Final CAWP Assessment Rating: Excellent. 99% of applicable CAWP standards were met overall. Possible ratings for CAWP Assessments are 96-100% Excellent, 86-95% Good, 70-85% Complies, and 0-69% Failure to Comply.