

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Wild Horse and Burro Program

Congress directed the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and U.S. Forest Service in 1971 to manage and protect America's wild horses and burros to support a thriving natural ecological balance on public lands.

THE CHALLENGE

Since receiving federal protection, the wild horse and burro population on public lands has soared.

25,000

Wild horses and burros lived on public lands in 1971.


25,500

Wild horses and burros can live in balance with wildlife and livestock on healthy public lands today.

73,130

Wild horses and burros estimated to live on public lands in 2025.

Wild horse and burro populations **grow rapidly**. Unmanaged herds can **double in size every four years**.

 = 1,000 animals



46 herds are at or below appropriate management level

129 herds are overpopulated



OVERPOPULATION

Overpopulated herds threaten land and herd health. Too many wild horses and burros can lead to:



Starvation and thirst for horses, burros and other wildlife



Less native vegetation and more invasive weeds, such as cheatgrass



More wild horses and burros on highways and private property in search of food and water



U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
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To learn about the variety of ways you can get involved, contact the BLM at WildHorse@BLM.gov or 866-468-7826, or visit BLM.gov/WHB.



BLM SOLVING THE CHALLENGE

BLM continues to develop and implement new management tools while working with effective partners who share the goal of managing healthy wild horses and burros on healthy public rangelands.



Reduce Overpopulation

Use nonlethal means of gather and removal to achieve a herd size that is in balance with available resources and other uses of the land.



Find Good Homes & Provide Long-Term Care

For animals removed from the range, find good, private homes or provide long-term care on off-range pastures.



Implement Fertility Control

As herd size reaches appropriate levels, implement population growth suppression methods to slow growth.

BLM is investing in research to develop better fertility control methods and other management tools.



PRIVATE CARE AND OFF-RANGE PASTURES

There are two paths for excess wild horses and burros gathered from overpopulated herds:

1

Placement into Private Care

> 6,600

wild horses and burros were adopted and sold in Fiscal Year 2024

Rates of adoption and sales have historically not kept up with the growth of populations on the range. For wild horses not placed into a home through adoption or sale, the BLM provides life-time care on an off-range pasture.

2

Off-Range Pastures

Most unadopted and unsold wild horses roam off-range pastures, which provide open space and long-term care.

Nearly **68,000** wild horses and burros are cared for in off-range facilities, including nearly **39,000** wild horses located on off-range pastures.



The BLM is committed to working with Congress, state and local governments, partner organizations and the public to find practical solutions to achieve healthy and sustainable populations of wild horses and burros on healthy public lands.



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