

Forest Service plan for Arizona's Heber wild horses could mean death in 2023

From [Reality Checks With Staci-Lee Sherwood](#)

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After stalling for years the FS is crafting their Heber Wild Horse Territory management plan, due January 2023. It's anticipated to call for the removal of nearly all horses. The few remaining will be experimented on with PZP, by non-profits with hefty government contracts. For these groups the payoff is \$ not saving horses.



A looming tragedy is about to take place in Arizona's Apache-Sitgreaves forest. A herd of about 400 wild horses, relatively untouched and unspoiled by humans, is facing a death sentence. Nearly all other areas where wild horses had roamed freely for centuries have been destroyed. Despite a landmark law in 1971 that granted wild horses and burros **legal protection** and freedom from human harassment while living on 50 million acres of public land, they have never been truly protected.

No sooner was the law signed than ranchers, developers and mining interests began to rip it to shreds. Over the years their land has been reduced by nearly half, their population has been drastically reduced and fragmented and the word 'livestock' is used to get the public into thinking they're not native wildlife. Brutal and unnecessary roundups have taken place throughout the plains and western states.

In reality most horses and almost all burros are sold to kill buyers for slaughter, not adopted. All of this is known and actively supported by the Bureau of Land MISmanagement (BLM) despite the billions of taxpayer dollars given to them to ensure the animals' protection. The BLM's entire wild horse and burro policy is contrary to US law but neither the Dept of Interior officials nor the Dept of Justice care to investigate.

Forest Service threat

The Heber wild horses in Arizona are managed by the Forest Service (FS), which oddly enough comes under the jurisdiction of the Dept of Agriculture. They have a massive \$7,000,000,000 annual budget and

their own so called ‘non-profit’ yet can’t manage to keep wildfires at bay or forests healthy and sustainable. Many of their policies run contrary to common sense. They should not be in the business of managing wild horses. Their version of managing mimics that of the BLM, brutal roundups, swift often private auctions for kill buyers then quickly move in the livestock to graze on once healthy land where horses lived.

The FS is part of the USDA, whose only approach to animals is two ways, dead now or dead later. They aren’t in the business of conservation but of slaughter so having any part of their department attempt to manage wild animals makes for a schizophrenic policy at best. USDA is home to Wildlife Services, that agency kills millions of native wild animals, many endangered, annually for the purpose of protecting private ranchers.

According to Christopher Kerin, USDA Wild Horse & Burro Coordinator **“We use a simultaneous double observer technique that the BLM uses to count horses seen from the air. We do not group horses. Most bands are in smaller groups.”** The BLM has a long *documented* history of inflating population numbers to fit the ranchers overpopulation narrative. Overpopulation has *never been independently proven* but their lies have. The FS is no better when they copy the BLM. In a 2022 letter from AG Secretary Tom Vilsack the FS claims 700 horses live in the territory based on counts since 2014, click here to read letter

<https://ispmb.org/2022/05/vilsack-denies-to-implement-science/>

This FS Memorandum 2021 disputes their own claim of 700 horses. It states a count of 378. How can anyone believe anything these people say?

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MEMORANDUM

To: Tolani Francisco, Scott Grunder (USFS)
CC: Paul Griffin, Michelle Crabb (BLM assistance)
From: Bruce Lubow, Ph.D.
Date: 28 June 2021
RE: Statistical analysis for 2021 surveys of wild horse abundance in Heber WHT and nearby USFS lands, Arizona

Summary Table

Start date	End date	Area names
20 April 2021	20 April 2021	Heber WHT and western portion of Sitgreaves National Forest.
Type of Survey: Simultaneous double-observer		
Aviation Details	Helicopter:	AS 350B3, N618ME
	Pilot:	Santi Garcia, Mountain Air
Agency Personnel	Observers:	Austin Rauh, Nick Welsh (Truckee Meadows), Tyler McCafferty, Andy Habgood, Mark Willis (USFS)
	Aviation Manager:	Nick Welsh (Truckee Meadows)

Summary Narrative

In April 2021 US Forest Service (USFS) personnel conducted simultaneous double-observer aerial surveys from a helicopter of the wild horse abundance in Heber Wild Horse Territory (WHT) and nearby lands of Sitgreaves National Forest (NF). This survey did not cover some other portions of Sitgreaves NF or Apache NF, as has sometimes been done in the past. Surveys were conducted using methods recommended by a National Academy of Sciences review (NRC 2013) with detailed field methods described in Griffin et al. (2020) and applied by USFS in the past and in other forests. I analyzed these data using established statistical methods to estimate sighting probabilities for horses, then used these sighting probabilities to correct the raw counts for systematic biases (undercounts) that are known to occur in aerial surveys (Lubow and Ransom 2016), and to provide confidence intervals and other measures of uncertainty associated with the abundance estimates. At the time of the surveys, the estimated total number of horses within the boundaries of the Heber WHT was 83 (90% confidence interval = 56-117). The overall total estimated number of wild horses present in the surveyed area of the Sitgreaves NF (including the Heber WHT), at the time of the surveys was 378 adults (90% confidence interval = 334-449) adults and 35 foals (90% CI = 28-43; Table 1).

Vultures in wind

The Heber herd has not had their genetic diversity destroyed by using PZP. Almost all the wild horse non-profits promote this misguided lie with wild claims it saves horses. It does not. Those groups get millions of tax dollars to slowly destroy wild horses and will not act in the interest of the Heber herd. Fertility methods of any kind for any excuse will not save them. Under US law the government was directed to protect wild horses not experiment on them. A study of them in the wild is what is needed to protect them. For those not sure who is trying to save wild horses and who only pretends to for donations and govt contracts here a good place to start

<https://www.realitycheckwithstacilee.com/post/junk-food-non-profits-their-empty-promises-fail-to-deliver>

Moon deserves a life free of abuse & drugs don't you agree?



False claims

For decades wild horses were blamed for over grazing and destroying the land. These claims come mostly from ranchers deflecting attention away from who is *really* doing the damage, their animals. Cows, as sweet as they can look, are not native and not designed to coexist on our land. Unlike wild horses that restore the balance and health of the ecosystem the cows and sheep over graze which; destroys topsoil, leads to/worsen droughts, increase green house gases with their belches, contaminate the water with their waste and crush endangered vegetation as they trample the land. Click here to learn about livestock damage

<https://www.realitycheckswithstacilee.com/post/grazed-to-death-how-the-livestock-grazing-program-on-public-lands-cause-dead-zones-extinctions>

Making room for livestock is a big reason native, often endangered, wildlife are removed from habitat and killed. There is no legitimate argument for the public to subsidize this private industry. The federal grazing program costs taxpayers millions in a losing program. The insanity of paying to kill native animals in exchange for destructive non native animals shows the absurdity of government policies. It's time we ended the waste and death that stems from that. Click here to learn the damage livestock grazing does (but wild horses get blamed for)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BYQ72AK0_8

Both species granted legal protection. Eagles live free from human harassment but wild horses are abused and killed....by the same government.

The Mustang and the Bald Eagle American Symbols of Freedom



