

December 5, 2023

Dear National Wild Horse and Burro Advisory Board:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on this important matter. Our organization is comprised of 321 wildlife professionals across Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, Mexico, and Costa Rica, who are dedicated to wildlife stewardship that is driven by science. Our mission is to inspire, empower, and enable wildlife professionals to sustain wildlife populations and habitat through science-based management and conservation.

Native wildlife populations continue to be impacted by anthropogenic stressors including the expansion of exotic and non-native species. This is especially the case in the arid regions of the Southwestern US where landscapes can often degrade quickly if challenges are not addressed. Feral horses and burros can be a serious threat to native wildlife as they expand and degrade habitats and ecosystems. The public often perceives feral horses and burros as a part of the natural ecosystem without understanding the extensive landscape damages that result from the presence of these non-native species on the landscape. Damages are difficult to control without strategies aimed at successfully decreasing population sizes.

We recommend directing attention and resources toward identifying the impacts of feral horses and burros on native wildlife populations and habitats and encourage the BLM to consider decreasing or eliminating feral horse and burro populations in Herd Areas that have insufficient habitat resources. We support the management of feral horses and burros at or below Acceptable Management Levels using valid monitoring techniques. We strongly recommend the BLM prioritize the requirements and needs of native species over non-native feral horses and burros in planning efforts.

Thank you for considering our comments. Should you have questions please reach out to the President of the Southwest Section of the Wildlife Society (tw.southwest.section@gmail.com).

Sincerely,

2023 Executive Board of the Southwest Section of The Wildlife Society

Kay Nicholson, President
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