



SIERRA CLUB - TOIYABE CHAPTER

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STATEMENT ON THE CALICO COMPLEX HORSE ROUNDUP

The Toiyabe Chapter of the Sierra Club endorses the removal of 2,500 horses from the Calico Mountains and the retention of approximately 600 horses. The excessive number of horses in the Calico Complex threatens "the continued existence of diverse natural systems and the preservation of native biodiversity" and further that numbers of horses and burros "should be carefully regulated to minimize conflict with wildlife, livestock and other range values" according to Sierra Club policies.

Nevada has the largest number of wild horses and burros in the West, approximately 20,000. The Toiyabe Chapter supports horses and burros on public lands as part of multiple use and public enjoyment. Yet horses must be managed. Nevada's rangelands have been devastated by extended droughts and wildfires burning millions of acres of public and private lands, increasing risks to Sage Grouse and other native endemic species, all in the face of BLM budgets which are inadequate to monitor and manage our public lands and resources. BLM faces the multiple crises of overpopulations of Wild Horses and Burros, inadequate adoption demand and skyrocketing costs of BLM holding facilities and now the removal of excess horses.

A thousand pound horse consumes 26 pounds of forage a day, 365 days a year. However, desert plants do not produce palatable forage every day. Horses have no predators except starvation and man. A herd doubles in population every four to five years. They are successful competitors and will consume available vegetation thereby ensuring the loss of wildlife diversity and populations which also depend on the same plants. . The best interests of Nevada's public lands, including horses and wildlife, are served by timely removals of excess horses.

In 1977-78 about 300 horses starved to death in the Buffalo Hills. If a starving horse were privately owned, the animal would be removed and the owner penalized. Starvation of horses owned by the public and on public land is no more acceptable.

For the past 50 years the Toiyabe Chapter, which covers Nevada and eastern California, has argued for preservation of healthy public lands. The Chapter has commented on livestock grazing, mining, utility corridors, recreation plans, supported wilderness, protected water sources and monitored sale of public lands. Sierra Club members participate in the EIS and planning processes, attend hearings, and serve on BLM Advisory Boards. Among our actions, which relate to our support for the removal of horses from the Calico Complex, was our participation in the development of standards and guidelines governing livestock grazing.

Tina Nappe, Wildlife Co-Chair
Toiyabe Chapter of the Sierra Club