



Note: Page two has been corrected from the original release. The comment on deaths during removals was inadvertently noted on the line for adoptions and sales and should have been on the previous line for removals. There is no change to the stated numbers.

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How do you make 2000 horses disappear? Let BLM manage them.

CHICAGO, (EWA) – As controversy swirls over the aggressive removal of horses from the range by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), a more fundamental question has arisen over what is happening to the horses it already has in holding. Over the past several years, equine advocates have been scrutinizing the BLM’s horse population counts. Once again, the numbers don’t add up to their claims.

The BLM doesn’t make it easy to track horses being removed from the range or residing in short and long term holding. The taxpayers who pay for the removals and the subsequent care are not allowed to view the horses under the well worn excuse that they are being held on “private property”. Consequently, there are no checks and balances to verify information being reported.

It also raises a salient question. With 262 million mostly vacant acres under its control, why on earth is a federal agency such as the BLM wasting taxpayer’s money to lease private property?

Increasingly, the BLM is using the “private property” wild card whenever they don’t want the public to see what they are doing – whether it’s the actual removals or subsequent holding. A recent article by George Knapp, [They execute horses, don’t they?](#), spoke to this devious maneuver.

Somewhere on “private property” there are 2,282 horses missing from the BLM’s wild horse holding facilities or the numbers the BLM is reporting are not accurate.

As of July 9, 2010, BLM has removed 5,334 horses from public lands and yet, an increase of only 625 horses is reflected on their most recent [population facility chart](#) for fiscal-year (FY) 2010.

A first grade child could do the math by taking the number of horses reported on holding facility charts, adding the number of horses rounded-up and subtracting the number reported as adopted and sold and quickly discover the totals are not accurate.

- 33,166 horses in holding (starting point for FY 2010 from October 2009 BLM report)
- 5,334 horses removed and deaths during removals, through July 9 (prior to the Tuscarora round-up) Note: Although the BLM reported only 2 deaths, we have added a total 170 deaths to compensate for the deaths known to have occurred during the Calico removals.
- 2,427 adopted and sold

The BLM numbers don't even reflect the 300 - 500 adopted horses BLM claims are returned by adopters each year, or the number of foals born in captivity. According to the 2008 GAO BLM report, 303 foals were born in long term holding during FY 2007. In either case, adding those numbers to the counts only *increases* the number of missing horses.

After allowing for the deaths, the BLM should still have 36,073 horses in holding facilities but they are reporting only 33,791 on the June 2010 holding facility chart. "Where are the 2,282 horses that are missing from BLM's accounting of the horses in holding facilities?" asked EWA vice president, Valerie James-Patton.

The GAO report states that BLM is not required to report the number of deaths in long term holding facilities, but if 2,282 horses have died there in just a nine month period, there's a much larger problem taking place in BLM's wild horse facilities than just what paper work reveals, certainly much more than what BLM is willing to tell.

"How can we have any confidence in BLM's estimates of the wild horse population when they can't even count the number of horses in their pens?" asked EWA's president, John Holland.

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The Equine Welfare Alliance is a dues free, umbrella organization with over 115 member organizations. The organization focuses its efforts on the welfare of all equines and the preservation of wild equids. www.equinewelfarealliance.org