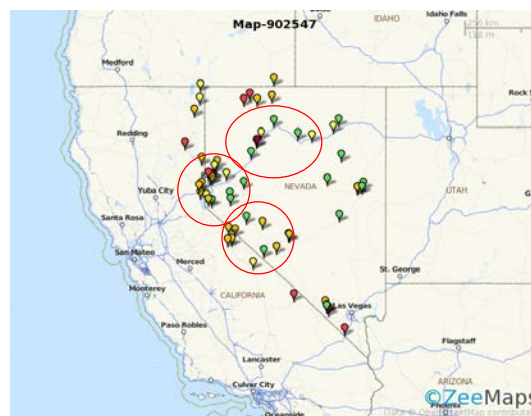


As a drought warning alarms throughout the state of Nevada, a concern for a wild horse gather by the Bureau of Land Management in its response to drought is rising. Over the past years, the government has consistently conducted roundups of wild horses and burros in Nevada to minimize rangeland degradation. However, such policy overlooks some important points that leads to a failure of the BLM to address the issue and reduce the environmental damage.

Claim 1: Problem in Generalization of Drought Severity in Northwestern NV

The U.S. Drought Monitor categorizes the regions in western and northwestern Nevada into “Extreme Drought” and “Exceptional Drought.” Taking a close look at the precipitation average to date on March 24th, reported by California Nevada River Forecast Center, the precipitation varies from place to place within the regions in western and northwestern Nevada¹. In the marked regions of the map below, there are places where the precipitation average to date exceeds 80% (shown in green). Groups of them can be found in western and northwestern Nevada, and those places are in close proximity to the cluster of places where precipitation average to date is below 60% (shown in orange).



(see Appendix A)

Therefore, when the BLM consults to the U.S. Drought Monitor to identify drought afflicted areas, a careful analysis of individual regions must be sought for.

Claim 2: Ratio between Livestock/Other Big Games and Horses/Burros in Nevada

In 2011, the total number of AUMs used for grazing was 13,333,346. This included 1,205,675 for cattle/yearlings/bison, 3,215 for domestic horses and burros, and 124,456 for sheep and goats. The total AUMs for wild horses and burros in Nevada in 2011 was 12,371 indicating that the livestock AUMs was 107 times higher than wild horse and burros AUMs statewide².

There are 6 grazing districts in Nevada. Winnemucca is one district located in Northwestern NV encompassing Humboldt and Pershing counties, and portions of Washoe, Lyon and Churchill counties, where there has been an “Extreme” or “Exceptional” drought warning. The total public and private acres allowed for public grazing in Winnemucca district was approximately 11,183,975 in 2010³. The total HMAs in Winnemucca—including Blue Wing⁴, Owyhee⁵, Jackson Mountains⁶, Tri-State-Calico⁷, Augusta Mountains⁸, and Calico complexes⁹—was around 3,285,490 acres, slightly less than 30% of the total grazing acres in Winnemucca district (see Appendix B).

Comparing the recent size of the areas allotted to wild horses and burros and those allotted to livestock other big games, grazing by horses and burros is done much less than what is done by livestock and other big games.

Claim 3: Wild Horses and Burros Could Reduce Fire Hazard

While cheat grass is a valuable forage grass for cattle, sheep, and wild horses and burros, this inflammable vegetation is a major contributor to fires in the West. A study has suggested that wild horses can be an effective fire hazard reducer by consuming this grass before it is able to set seed.

Due to their constant moving, wild horses and burros can eliminate the cheat grass over larger areas than does livestock in confined areas¹⁰.

Moreover, the study indicates that droppings of wild horses and burros help the soil to retain water which can dampen out fires¹⁰.

Appendix

- A. Monthly Precipitation Summary by California Nevada River Forecast Center on March 24, 2014.
These are the locations used on the map.

TH AND CENTRAL LAHONTAN

ID	Location	Pct Avg to Date
CEDC1	CEDARVILLE	71
DOYC1	DOYLE	49
FOBC1	FORT BIDWELL	73
JESC1	JESS VALLEY	56
Q63	SUTCLIFFE-PYRAMID LK	51
SNVC1	SUSANVILLE	39
STDN2	STEAD	39
WAWN2	WADSWORTH 4N	75

LAKE TAHOE...TRUCKEE...CARSON...WALKER

ID	Location	Pct Avg to Date
BDEC1	BODIE	55
BOCC1	BOCA RESERVOIR	56
BPTC1	BRIDGEPORT	47
CRCN2	CARSON CITY	56
DAGN2	DAGGET PASS	54
DONC1	DONNER MEM SP	57
FEXN2	FALLON EXPER STATION	110
GLBN2	GLENBROOK	76
HTHN2	HAWTHORNE	179
MINN2	MINDEN	80
RNO	RENO	46
SRKN2	SPARKS	49
TAHC1	TAHOE CITY	49
TKEC1	TRUCKEE RS	47
WABN2	WABUSKA 6SE	86
YRGN2	YERINGTON	99

MOJAVE...MONO LAKE...SALTON SEA

ID	Location	Pct Avg to Date
BARC1	BARSTOW	34
BIH	BISHOP AP	60
DEVC1	DEATH VALLEY	26
ELLC1	ELLERY LAKE	48
FMTC1	FAIRMONT	27
HEEC1	HAIWEE	9
INDC1	INDEPENDENCE	41
IPL	IMPERIAL	48
LEV1	LEE VINING	42
PSP	PALM SPRINGS	18

HUMBOLDT

ID	Location	Pct Avg to Date
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B23 BATTLE MOUNTAIN		87
BOWN2	BEOVAWE	72
EKO	ELKO	79
GIBN2	GIBBS RANCH	67
IMLN2	IMLAY	75
LOVN2	LOVELOCK	99
RYPN2	RYE PATCH DAM	90
WMC	WINNEMUCCA	106

BLACK ROCK DESERT

ID	Location	Pct Avg to Date
DUFN2	DUFURRENA (SHELDON)	15
KRVN2	KINGS RIVER VALLEY	41
LCRN2	LEONARD CREEK RANCH	31
MCDN2	MCDERMITT	42
ORVN2	OROVADA 4WSW	58

CENTRAL NEVADA DESERT

ID	Location	Pct Avg to Date
ARTN2	ARTHUR 4NW	86
BLN2	BLUE EAGLE RANCH	88
DYRN2	DYER	82
EKAN2	EUREKA	90
ELY	ELY	118
LAGN2	LAGES	143
MCGN2	MCGILL	122
MNAN2	MINA	66
PAHN2	PAHRUMP	38
RBLN2	RUBY LAKE	113
RTHN2	RUTH	50
SKVN2	SMOKEY VALLEY	90
SLVN2	SILVERPEAK	54
TPHTONOPAH		53

B. Winnemucca District HMA Acres by Complex

Name	Public HMA Acres	Private HMA Acres	Total
Blue Wing	NA	NA	639,000
Owyhee			
a. Little Humboldt	15,734	1,417	17,151
b. Owyhee	336,262	2,025	338,287
c. Rock Creek	98,169	23,264	121,433
d. Little Owyhee	454,416	5,811	460,227
e. Snowstorm	103,644	13,465	117,109
Jackson	NA	NA	283,000
Tri-Sate-Calico	NA	NA	584,000
Augusta Mountains	NA	NA	182,883
Calico Mountains Complex	NA	NA	542,100
TOTAL			3,285,190

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