

## Burros Face Roundup

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True, they're not horses. But think of burros as our horses smaller, fuzzier, longer-eared distant cousins. Right now a herd of them in Southern California are facing relocation. As many as 150 wild burros roam the scraggly foothills of the eastern Mojave Desert near the town of Hesperia. The U.S. Bureau of Land Management plans to round them up using helicopters mid-January. The burros will then be put up for public adoption. Of course, there are only so many welcoming homes for feral burros, hence the outcry from local animal rights activists who worry about the little gray and dun-colored denizens of the desert.

According to the BLM, the burros are disturbing the natural habitat of the endangered desert tortoise. No one in the federal government seems to want the burros, either. The Park Service and Fish and Wildlife are not interested in managing burros. The creatures are banned from the national parks because they are not native and compete with native creatures for survival.

Beyond the roundup in the Mojave Desert, burros are creating another problem. In the Moreno Valley suburb of Riverside, Calif., burros have become a dangerous nuisance to vehicles winding their way through a rural corridor. A freeway that links several booming residential communities traverses the burros' range. A UPS delivery truck struck a wild burro recently, prompting police to warn that the animals are an all-too-common threat to motorists. Last year, a 21-year-old woman was killed when her car collided with a burro in the road late at night. Though yellow street signs with the silhouette of a donkey are posted on roadways throughout the area, the animals continue to be a lurking problem.

So, what will happen with the burgeoning burro problem? Since the BLM has yet to adequately solve the dilemma of handling America's feral mustangs, the fate of the burro remains cloudy.