

## Drought in West a Burden to Burros

**A record dry spell moves feral burros into dangerous situations.**

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The mountains surrounding much of suburban Southern California are parched, thanks to a record drought. That's extremely evident in the resort area near the town of Big Bear, where pine trees around the lake are beginning to look as dry as the desert. As the environment becomes drier, the native population of feral burros is forced to leave the barren slopes and head into town for food. Unfortunately, that can have disastrous results. Last week, a baby burro that was grazing along the roadside with two adult burros was mauled by a pack of four loose dogs.

Luckily, a woman who lived in a home near the scene ran out with a baseball bat and chased the dogs away. She then scooped up the baby burro, loaded it into the back of her pickup truck and took it to a nearby vet who treated it for lacerations and puncture wounds. Currently, the "burrito" is recovering from its wounds. But that doesn't alleviate the growing problem with the hungry burros in town. Aside from becoming fodder for packs of roving dogs, they're also a danger to motorists. In the last few years, several burros have been killed after being struck by oncoming cars. As a result, U.S. Forest Service officials are encouraging residents to refrain from leaving food and water out for wild burros. However, not much else is being done to aid the furry, long-eared critters.