



# Wild Horse Sanctuary

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## Why Allow Reproduction At All?

Some people ask why we allow any foals to be born at the Wild Horse Sanctuary and it's a valid question.

- When the first 80 horses were rescued in 1977, every male was gelded.
- However, over the years much concern has been voiced regarding the future survival and genetic viability of wild horses on the public lands. Hence, we began allowing some stallions to have harems.
  - It is important to note: The horses and burros here at the Wild Horse Sanctuary are free to live anywhere on the 5,000 acre preserve and truly self-select their family bands. Stallions choose their mares and geldings form their own bands based on their preferences. We do not corral or pasture horses together based on our preferences.
- The Sanctuary is being proactive in pursuing ways to limit the number of foals born each year, while preserving the genetics of the mustangs.
- We have pioneered research with the University of California at Davis on reversible infertility in mares with the hope of giving horses a better life in the wild. That research led to the PZP vaccine, which is now being used around the world on upward of 50 different species of animals. PZP research would not have been possible without active stallions.
- The Sanctuary has also hosted various behavioral studies – to study horses in a native habitat for natural behavior, some breeding is necessary. We do limit reproduction though, both by gelding male horses and spaying some mares.
- Foals born at the Sanctuary are offered for adoption each fall to effectively manage the herd of approximately 300 wild mustangs and burros. These youngsters serve as wonderful ambassadors for the American Mustang. Adopters share stories about their mustangs from the Wild Horse Sanctuary serving as ranch horses, therapeutic riding (children and veterans), trail partners, and a number have been shown in Dressage and Jumping.
- All of what the Sanctuary does is for the benefit of wild horses here as well as providing a model and valuable information to improve the quality of life of wild horses everywhere.