

Disagreement over how to manage wild horses

By John M. Glionna, Las Vegas Sun

ANTELOPE VALLEY – Just after dawn, a dozen mustangs stampede across the high desert, harassed by a white helicopter that dips and swoops like a relentless insect. Frightened stallions lead a tightknit family band, including two wild-eyed foals that struggle to keep up.



Wild mustangs in Nevada have long pitted animal groups against the government. Photo/Rick Loomis/Los Angeles Times

Three animal activists watch through long-range camera lenses as wranglers hired by the federal Bureau of Land Management help drive the animals into a camouflaged corral. The private-contract pilot is paid \$500 for each captured horse, dead or alive.

After a 10-mile run, one band of horses storms past the corral, prolonging the chase. While most of the horses enter the trap, a few break for open territory, the chopper in pursuit.

Few escape. The roundup corrals 180 mustangs, often employing a tactic that sets the species up to betray itself: A wrangler holds the reins of a tame horse at the mouth of the trap. As the mustangs draw close, the worker releases the animal – known as a Judas horse – which dashes into the corral, followed instinctively by the others.

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