Application of ungulate research and management experience to wild horse and burro management

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Agenda

- Background
- Sterilization vs Vaccination
- History of Ungulate Management
- Proposed Strategy
- Impediments to Management
Management strategies include gatherings and off-range pasturing.

Discussion surrounding fertility control as management tool.

Research on techniques to inhibit reproduction.

Next step in advancing fertility control is implementation of management initiatives.
Sterilization vs Vaccination

- Need to treat >90% to incur decline.
- Need to have treatment that is “single dose” to be practical on a landscape level.
- Use surgical sterilization as a surrogate to assess fertility control as a potential management tool.
Ungulate Management

- Strategic, systematic, intensive, skilled, disciplined, measure and analyzed.
- Ungulate management programs have direct application to WHB management.
- Large rural environments allow for more diverse methods to maximize efficiency and increase likelihood of success.
Case Study: Staten Island, NY

- Large complex environment
- Systematic coverage of the landscape
- Best technology and skilled personnel
- Assessment and monitoring with cameras
- One dimensional method requires higher intensity and more intensive labor
A strategic approach should determine feasibility, cost, and logistics of sterilizing a high percentage of individuals through the assessment of several variables including:

- Access
- Horse abundance
- Approachability of horses
- Feasibility of using corrals
- Vulnerability to water or food resources
Proposed Strategy

- Sequence of management methods
- Combine best capture methods:
  - Corral traps
  - Remote immobilization at water or bait source
  - Helicopter darting
- Rapid implementation
Impediments to Management

- Political acceptability of methods is critical.
- “Normal” behavior is desired.
- Accepting risks to use tools outside of comfort zone.
Questions