

Slaughter of Wild Horses Draws Outrage in Nevada

ROBERT A. JONES, Times Staff Writer

AUSTIN, Nev.—Far back into an empty mountain range in central Nevada, the horse carcasses are scattered along a wash. A small herd of wild mustangs had come here, in the heat of the summer, to catch a drink at a small spring. As they came near the water, or as they left, someone began to shoot.

At the sound of the first shot, almost certainly, the horses spooked and ran. But the shooters—were ready for this, and one by one they picked off the herd. In all about 15 horses were killed here, their decaying bodies now marking the line of their attempted retreat.

The wash and its spring, many miles from the nearest paved road, are so little visited by humans that they have no name. Jimmy Wil-

liams, a local rancher, has lived his entire life in this region of sage-covered mountains and never visited the wash until he heard of the killings. Last week he came to take a look, and his first thought was how good a spot the killers had picked.

"They thought no one would come by this place for years," Williams said. "By that time the horses would just be a pile of old bones, something to kick your boot at."

But someone did see them. In late August a helicopter pilot was flying over these slopes when he saw the sprawled bodies, and then noticed even more in other washes. He called the U.S. Bureau of Land Management, which has jurisdic-

Please see HORSES, Page 34

BLM confirms 44 horses murdered

Carson City NEVADA APPEAL—Wednesday, August 31, 1988

By The Associated Press

The federal Bureau of Land Management confirmed today that as many as 44 wild horses were shot to death in a remote area north of Austin.

BLM spokesman Bob Stewart said two investigators checked the rugged area on Tuesday and determined the horses had been shot over a period of several months, with the most recent shooting occurring about two weeks ago.

Stewart also said the investigation team, led by George High, isn't discussing what physical evidence was found.

Thirty-three of the horse carcasses had been spotted by BLM helicopter and airplane pilots earlier this month. The two BLM investiga-

tors who walked over the area found additional carcasses beneath brush which hadn't been visible from the air.

Stewart said the investigators had planned to take samples of water from a nearby spring to determine whether the water had been poisoned, but didn't bother since it was obvious that the animals had been shot.

The state Commission for the Preservation of Wild Horses already has offered a reward for information leading to the arrests and convictions of people who shot the animals.

Stewart noted that the BLM has obtained convictions in the last two horse-shooting incidents that its agents investigated.

RC-g 9/29/88
Wild horse deaths climb

CARSON CITY — Nearly 130 wild horses have been gunned down in isolated areas of central Nevada, and there are reports of eight other horses shot in southern Nevada, officials said Wednesday.

The federal Bureau of Land Management said Wednesday the count of horses found shot 30 miles north of the central Nevada town of Austin stands at 87, in addition to 41 horses slaughtered 30 miles away, also in Lander County.

Rewards totaling \$12,000 are being offered by the Nevada Commission for the Preservation of Wild Horses, the Northern Nevada Humane Society, Wild Horse Organized Assistance Committee and Animal Protection Institute for information leading to convictions in the shootings.

BLM spokesman Bob Stewart said investigators checked the 87 horse carcasses and bone piles this week and determined all had been hit by rifle fire over a six-month period.

Stewart said the BLM also is sending staffers to the Silver Peak area in southern Nevada to look into a report that eight more wild horses had been shot near a spring in the past several weeks.

8/31/88