

Groups rounding up aid for orphaned foals

By Michael Phillis
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Abandoned by starving mares, rescued from hungry coyotes and shipped 500 miles to Reno, growing numbers of baby horses are looking for local foster homes.

"We're not looking for people to adopt these foals permanently, just for people willing to take care of them and bottle-feed them until they can be turned over to the BLM," said Cathy Barcomb, executive director for the Nevada Commission for the Preservation of Wild Horses.

"If you don't have a place where you could keep a foal, we also need volunteers to bottle-feed them," Barcomb said.

The younger foals — some are just days old — need to be bottle-fed every two hours, she said.

With up to 300 expected to arrive by the end of June, Barcomb said it will be impossible for her

and Dawn Lappin, director of the Wild Horse Organized Assistance, to feed them all.

The foals are from the Nellis Range in southern Nevada, where drought has magnified the growing problem of overpopulation. The BLM says there is enough water to support 1,024 horses, but there are an estimated 4,300 horses on the range.

To supplement the water, U.S. Air Force personnel at Nellis Air Base are hauling 14,000 to 17,000 gallons a day to the horses.

Barcomb said the horses have eaten so much of the forage that they have to travel up to 15 miles from watering holes to ranges where they feed. She said the lack of water and feed is causing mares to dry up their milk. Many get disoriented and leave the foals.

When the mares try to make it from water to feed, the foals sometimes can't keep up and get left behind. She said coyotes prowl the



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HELPING: Cathy Barcomb, left, and Karen Shields, both of Washoe Valley.

route looking for stranded foals.

The BLM is now conducting a roundup of 2,000 of the Nellis horses to thin the herd.

Anyone wishing to make a tem-

porary home for the foals, volunteer to work feeding shifts or to donate money may call Lappin at 851-4817 or Barcomb at her office at 687-5589, or home at 849-1357.