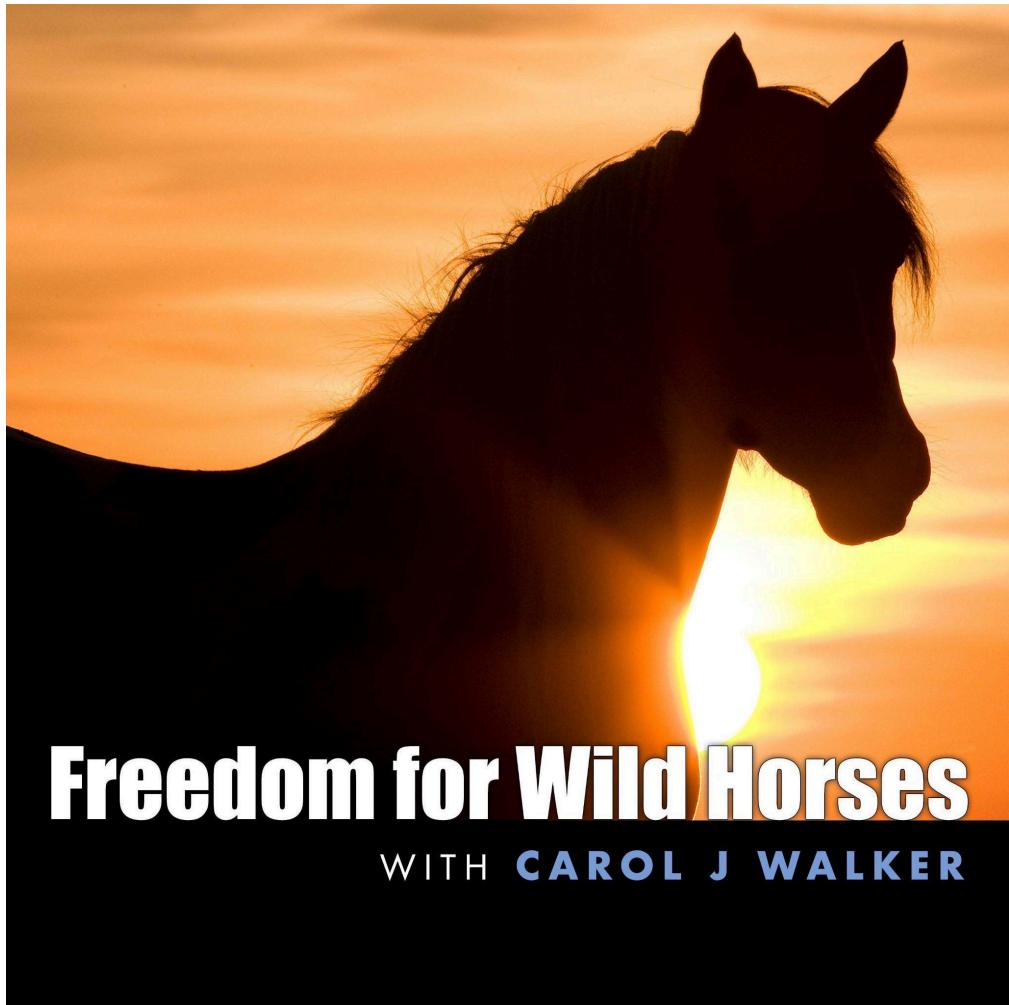


## Ep #65: A Year for Wild Horses



### Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

**Carol J. Walker**

[Freedom for Wild Horses](#) with Carol J. Walker

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If you've wondered what this coming year may bring for wild horses, this episode is for you. I'm your host, Carol Walker, and let's get started.

Welcome to the *Freedom For Wild Horses* podcast, the place to find out about wild horses in the American West and what you can do to help them stay wild and free. If you love wildlife, wild horses, and the freedom that they stand for, this show is for you. I'm your host, Carol Walker. Let's get started.

You've probably heard that 2026 in the Chinese Zodiac is the year of the Fire Horse. What does that mean? Of course, the horse is a symbol of movement and freedom, vitality, and drive. Fire adds passion and creativity and ambition. It will be a time of rapid change and breakthroughs. Nothing epitomizes the Fire Horse more than the wild horse, who lives their life unfettered, limited only by their wild environment and the limits that our government puts on them.

There is no question that the Bureau of Land Management is a corrupt agency whose management of our wild horses has been a disaster from the very start of the 1971 Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act. The agency never should have been charged with the care of our wild horses. Their ties to and submission to livestock ranchers who have grazing permits on our public lands make the idea of fairness and multiple use on our public lands a farce.

Wild horses have been forced out of over 22 million acres that they used to call home. And over 64,000 wild horses are stockpiled in holding facilities, corrals, and pastures that are mostly privately held and inaccessible to the public.

A recent policy change on sales has made it extremely easy for unscrupulous people to take advantage and purchase sale authority horses, those that are 10 and over, and those who have failed to be adopted three times, to be purchased by the truckload and dumped at auction, where they can be purchased by kill buyers and sent to slaughter.

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After the government shutdown last year, the roundups were halted except for a so-called emergency roundup in the Ewani HMA in Nevada that was supposedly because of lack of forage due to a fire that had been in the HMA. But somehow, the horses were in good condition, and there were cattle out grazing.

There is no oversight of the BLM. They don't comply with their own comprehensive welfare program rules and standards. They don't do the range assessments that they are required to do before planning or scheduling removals of wild horses. They prevent the public from having meaningful observation during roundups. And there are many other issues. Wild horses will always come last on the priority list for this agency.

What do I think should happen? First, remove the Bureau of Land Management as the manager of wild horses on our public lands. Install an independent agency with the welfare of our wild horses at its core.

Stop the roundups. Period. No more stockpiling wild horses in holding facilities.

Do research. Put the roundup dollars towards studies of the wild horses that are still free on our public lands. See what the actual effects of having them in their herd management areas does to and for the land. And find ways to improve their homes, their lands.

Do studies to find out what numbers of wild horses are sustainable in each herd management area and abolish the outdated and arbitrary appropriate management levels.

End grazing leases for livestock on all the herd management areas. Stop trying to convert herd management areas where wild horses live to herd areas not managed for wild horses. Yes, Wyoming Checkerboard, I mean you.

Get the new agency's employees out on the range with the horses. Wild horse manager is not a desk job, but a field job. Set up partnerships with

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locals to aid in studies, research, and where the population needs to be controlled in administering safe, reversible birth control.

What to do with the 64,000 wild horses in holding facilities? Well, the stallions are gelded, so it's not a breeding population. Return them to the 22 million acres of public lands that were removed from wild horse herd management areas. Let them live out their lives in freedom. Close the holding facilities. Most of these are private. Most of these are big moneymakers for the livestock ranchers.

Wild horses are not pests. They are not a nuisance. They are not feral. They are not useless. They are magnificent, wild, sentient beings with an innate sense of the wild lands where they belong. They are an essential part of our western lands and inheritance and deserve to be protected.

This year of the Fire Horse gives us an opportunity to leap forward, and for the wild horses, that is everything. Silence and stillness will not serve them. I'll be keeping everyone informed about opportunities to help them as the year progresses.

Thank you for listening to this episode of Freedom for Wild Horses.

Thank you for listening to this episode of *Freedom for Wild Horses*. If you want to learn more, follow me at [www.wildhoofbeats.com](http://www.wildhoofbeats.com) for more information and for ways to help America's wild horses. See you next time.