

# Salt River Wild Horses Shot, One Killed

October 25, 2016 Kristen Kovatch Kristen Kovatch



The Maricopa County Sheriff's Office is seeking any information from the public that would lead to the identification and arrest of those responsible for the shooting of wild horses in Arizona's Tonto National Forest that left two horses injured and one dead.

The Maricopa County Sheriff's Office (MCSO) encourages anyone with information regarding the shooting of three young wild horses in the famous Salt River herd of Tonto National Forest. Two of the horses shot currently appear to be stable and are still able to keep up with the rest of their band. One horse, however, a foal known to observers and advocates as Kai, is dead, having been shot in the head and neck and then reportedly mutilated, with parts of his body removed. (Some images in the following news video may be disturbing to some viewers.)

The Maricopa County's mounted posse has been mobilized and is searching for additional evidence in the Pirate's Island area of Tonto National Forest, near the Pebble Beach Recreation Area. The MCSO reports that the shooting took place around 6:00 PM on Friday evening, October 21 by a man wearing black shorts and a dark green shirt; two other people were present with the shooter. Maricopa County sheriff Joe Arpaio is outspoken about the cruelty of this case and how this incident goes far beyond animal abuse:

The Salt River Wild Horse Management Group, which has worked tirelessly to advocate for the Salt River wild horses and their preservation within Tonto National Forest, will continue to closely monitor the two surviving horses. The group has stepped in to rescue and remove injured or ill wild horses from this herd in the past and is prepared to step in to rescue these horses if necessary as part of the group's humane management plan.

This tragedy for the Salt River wild horses comes just over a year after advocates battled to protect the herd from total removal by the Forest Service, which put the horses into the international spotlight as symbols for wild horses all over the country. The Salt River Wild Horse Management Group is offering a \$2,500 reward for information leading to the arrest and conviction of the shooter, and is fundraising to increase the offered reward as well as to rescue the two surviving shot horses if deemed necessary.

Anyone with information related to this incident is encouraged to contact the MCSO at 602-876-1011.

