



## Volunteers monitoring Salt River horses after three found shot - KCTV5

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By Lauren Reimer



MCSO is looking for the person who shot 3 Salt River horses, killing one and has offered a reward. (Source: KPHO/KTVK)



Volunteers are doing a head count of all the wild Salt River horses, which could take weeks.  
(Source: KPHO/KTVK)



"We are devastated. These horses are like family to us.," said Simone Netherlands of Salt River Wild Horse Management Group. (Source: KPHO/KTVK)

TONTO NATIONAL FOREST, AZ (KPHO/KTVK) -

There's a \$7,300 reward for information on who shot three wild Salt River horses, one of which was killed and mutilated.

In addition to an MCSO investigation, volunteers are doing a headcount on all the known Salt River horses. It's believed there are between 80 and 140 animals. They all travel in small family bands, which can make it difficult to keep track of them all.

During the weekend, a six-month-old foal was found shot and killed. Two of his herd members were also wounded, but seem to be OK.

"I'm not a hunter, but I can understand someone wanting to go out and shoot a deer and they take it back and eat it," Charles Hulka, who kayaks regularly along the Salt River. But Hulka said the incident with the horses was not hunting. The dead foal was shot multiple times, his genitals removed.

"It's just senseless. Stupid," said Hulka.

"It just makes you sick," said Patricia Lambert, a visitor to the Tonto National Park.

These animals are monitored closely by the Salt River Wild Horse Management Group. "We are devastated. These horses are like family to us. We've seen them grow up. We record when they're born, and we see them out here every day so just to know that he suffered that bad is just really heartbreaking for us," said Simone Netherlands, the group's president.

The group is trying to figure out if any more animals have been killed.

"In a situation like this we're kind of calling the troops and making sure that we get a total headcount," said Netherlands.

Witnesses say the person who shot these animals was wearing a green shirt and black shorts and was with two other people at the time.

"If we see someone hurt those horses, we'd tell someone. We certainly would," said Lambert.

So far, volunteers have accounted for about half of all the known Salt River horses. It could take up to two weeks to find and count them all.

The wild horse organization has opened a GoFundMe page to take donations to increase the reward. The website can be found at <https://www.gofundme.com/reward-to-catch-wild-horse-killer>.

