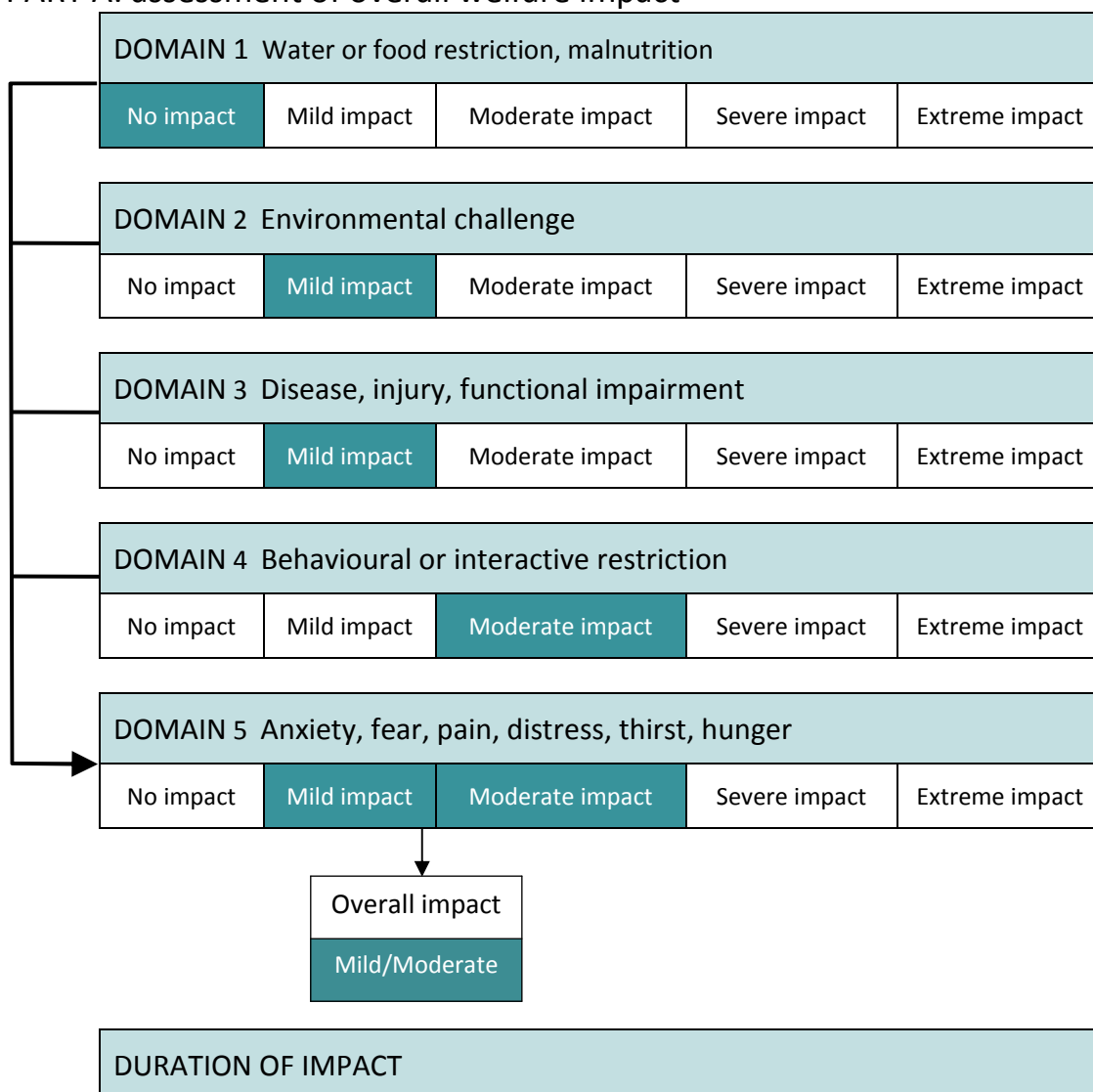


Control method: Mustering of feral horses

Assumptions:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Best practice is followed in accordance with the standard operating procedure HOR003. ▪ The assessment applies from the beginning of contact with the herd to when they are contained in yards (i.e. up to the point of shutting the gate). It does not cover actions after arrival in yards such as separating different classes of horses, as these will vary depending on the fate of horses (e.g. transported for slaughter or relocation, shooting in yards). ▪ Mustering is completed within daylight hours and that feed and water is provided on completion of mustering according to the standard operating procedure. ▪ The assessment of the impact of mustering should not be considered in isolation from subsequent stages (i.e. the period held in yards, drafting, shooting or transporting). The cumulative effects of these stages will compound welfare impact. Assessments of these stages are beyond the scope of the current assessment. ▪ There is not enough information to differentiate between aerial and ground mustering with regards to the effect on the horses – so both are dealt with here the same way.
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PART A: assessment of overall welfare impact



Immediate to seconds	Minutes	Hours	Days	Weeks
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SCORE FOR PART A:	<p>4 - if there is no mixing of social groups</p> <p>5 - if there is mixing of social groups</p>
Summary of evidence:	<p>Note: The decision on impact grades reported here are those that were reached by the majority of the panel. Some of the domains were graded higher by one of the invited panel members. These assessments were done at the first meeting of the panel, at subsequent meetings consensus was reached on all impact grades.</p>
Domain 1	There is some opportunity to feed on the way. The horses are being moved along within their normal environment and range so resources are available to them as they would be in absence of mustering.
Domain 2	As above. Within normal ranges.
Domain 3	Assuming mustering is carried out without placing additional stress (i.e. the pace is appropriate)
	There is the potential for injuries to occur during funnelling and yarding stages.
	If groups are mixed, the potential for injury increases.
Domain 4	Directing free roaming horses into a yard and then closing the gate will restrict some aspects of their behaviour. There could also be some negative behavioural effects if unfamiliar groups of horses are mixed during yarding.
	The horses are not moving as fast as during aerial shooting. The most stressful stage of the procedure will be when horses are channelled into the yards.
Domain 5	Assuming that impact is measured up to when the gates are shut, horses are likely to experience mild to moderate levels of anxiety and fear as they are being driven into yards.

PART B: assessment of mode of death

Not performed – non-lethal method

Summary

CONTROL METHOD:	Mustering of feral horses
OVERALL HUMANENESS SCORE:	<p>4 - if there is no mixing of social groups</p> <p>5 - if there is mixing of social groups</p>
Comments	<p>There is only limited, and somewhat conflicting, information in the literature on the welfare impact of mustering feral horses. One study from the US reported no deleterious effects of mustering (or 'roundups') on the behaviour or reproduction of feral horses¹. Another reference suggests that there is a reduction in foaling success associated with the stress induced by 'gather and removal'².</p> <p>Note that the score is less than trapping because the assessment for mustering ends at the 'gate shut' stage. To determine overall welfare impact it would be more realistic to also include the yarding period up to the beginning of the next stage (i.e. transport to another location or shooting). However</p>

the period of holding is likely to vary considerably so was not included in this assessment process.

Bibliography

1. Hansen, K.V. & Mosley, J.C. (2000). Effects of roundups on behavior and reproduction of feral horses. *Journal of Range Management* **53**, 479-482
2. Ashley, M.C. & Holcombe, D.W. (2001). Effect of stress induced by gathers and removals on reproductive success of feral horses. *Wildlife Society Bulletin* **29**, 248-254