

# Shackleford Banks Horse Herd Update

## September 25, 2012

In the summer of 2012 a milestone was reached. For the first time in the documented history of the herd, a horse has reached 30 years of age. This is 19 years older than the average age of the herd members.

Seven of the 108 horses are now in their twenties. This is considered a good “old” age for horses who fend entirely for themselves; wild horses don’t often live this long. The seven oldest horses are females. Contraception gives mares a break from foaling and contributes to them living longer. Contraception can also slow population increases that may result in the management action of young horses being removed. Earlier contraception was successful so it has not been used for population management since 2009.

The old-timer who reached this milestone is mare number 63. During her lifetime she gave birth to eleven foals. One of her colts went on to become an alpha stallion and sire two offspring.

Because 63 was so prolific and the horse population was high during some years, several of her offspring were removed along with other youngsters. Removed horses go to the Foundation for Shackleford horses and can be adopted into forever homes by the public.

Her home range is one of the quieter areas of the island. She is likely to be seen alone. She appears to choose this quiet location and solitude.

This milestone has been documented due to park and Foundation record keeping on the base of Princeton University data by Dr. Dan Rubenstein. We hope to see some of the 20+ year old mares reach this milestone in upcoming years.

For information on adoption of other horses, contact the Foundation.



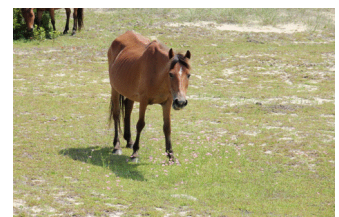
63's 2004 foal exploring around her dam.



Even at 30 years of age, a good roll scratches the back and fluffs up the hair coat.



63's 2005 foal plays with her tongue while her dam grazes at the edge of Back Sound.



63 looks thin along her top-line, but this is a common condition for older horses.