

Shackleford Banks Horse Herd Update 2010 06-29

Spring brings foals to Shackleford Banks. Last year, Alexa had a chestnut filly with a white blaze named Adriana. Alexa had a chestnut filly again this year - but with no white markings on her face. This year's name theme is 'astrology' and the new filly is named Aries. We will be determining their sires with DNA from dung; we believe Axl sired both youngsters.

Spring also brings longer days which start the breeding season. Stallions tend to escalate fights to higher levels as they vie for mares during the spring and summer.

Larry has been alone most of the time since July, 2008, when he lost a months-long battle with his former harem beta (second in command) Abu. When Abu won their harem, Larry became a bachelor.

Recently, we found Larry in his mid-west home range with Annie, a mare from the west. It's not clear how they got together. We believe that Larry went west, found Annie alone, and brought her back.

With them was a young challenger. Five years Larry's junior, Noah is coming into his prime. At seven years old, we expect to see Noah winning and holding mares for increasingly long periods of time until he can gain the skill and strength needed to be an alpha stallion.

The two stallions were fighting hard, with Larry holding his ground, keeping the mare, and Noah refusing to give up. They fought on-and-off for the whole time we watched and they continued as we left. It didn't look like Noah was going to win this mare, but with his determination he'll start his own harem some day soon.



Above: Alexa and Aries share a bonding moment.
Below: Larry (foreground) and Noah fight violently over a mare.

Photos by Fran Zaik.



June 29, 2010

Source: Cape Lookout National Seashore, Wildlife Biologist - Horses