#### HORSE COMMUNICATION



What Horses are Really Trying to Tell You!

## HORSES COMMUNICATE IN MANY DIFFERENT WAYS:

#### THEY COMMUNICATE WITH THEIR ENTIRE BODIES, INCLUDING THEIR:

- EARS
- EYES
- Nose
- TAIL
- HEAD/NECK
- AND THEIR VOICE

- IF A HORSE'S EARS
  ARE POINTING TO
  THE BACK OR SIDE,
  IT'S LISTENING TO
  SOMETHING IN THAT
  DIRECTION.
- IT'S ALSO RELAXED.



Photo courtesy of Nancy Hoffman

- IF A HORSE'S EARS
  ARE POINTING TO
  THE BACK, IT'S
  LISTENING TO
  SOMETHING BEHIND
  IT.
- IT CAN ALSO BE RELAXED.



Photo courtesy of https://www.nps.gov

- IF A HORSE'S EARS
  ARE PRICKED
  FORWARD, THAT
  MEANS IT'S ALERT.
- IT HAS NOTICED

  SOMETHING THAT'S
  EITHER INTERESTING
  OR FRIGHTENING.



Photo from https://15minutehorsefix.wordpress.com

- IF A HORSE'S EARS
  ARE PINNED BACK,
  IT'S SHOWING
  AGGRESSION.
- IT'S UPSET.
- A BITE OR KICK
  THREAT COULD
  FOLLOW.



Photo courtesy of Jennifer Ameigh

#### EYES

- A HORSE IS USUALLY
  LOOKING IN THE
  DIRECTION THAT ITS
  EARS ARE POINTING.
- THIS HORSE'S EYE IS BRIGHT.
- He's content but ALERT.

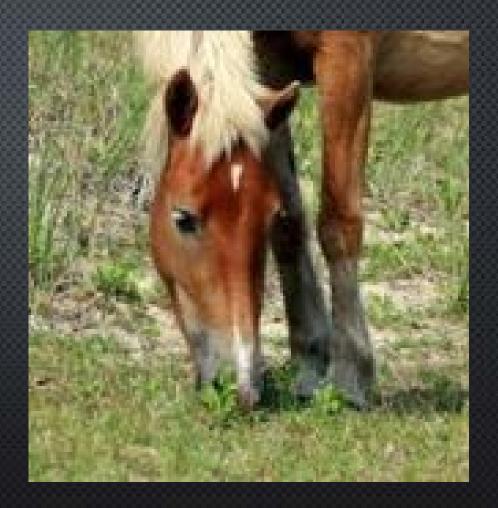


Photo courtesy of https://www.nps.gov

#### EYES

- THIS HORSE'S EYE IS CLOSED.
- He's Resting or SLEEPING.



Photo from https://15minutehorsefix.wordpress.com

#### EYES

• SHOWING THE WHITES OF THE EYES

CAN MEAN A HORSE
IS FEELING

AGGRESSIVE.

• WATCH OUT! HE MAY BITE, LUNGE, OR KICK!



Photo from https://15minutehorsefix.wordpress.com

### NOSE

- THIS HORSE'S NOSTRILS ARE FLARED.
- THIS SHOWS FEAR
   OR NERVOUSNESS.



Photo from https://15minutehorsefix.wordpress.com/

#### NOSE

- THIS HORSE'S NOSTRILS ARE PINCHED.
- He's feeling
   Aggressive. He
   LOOKS LIKE HE'S
   READY TO BITE!



Photo from https://15minutehorsefix.wordpress.com/

#### TAIL

- THIS HORSE'S TAIL IS HANGING NORMALLY.
- He's relaxed and content.



Photo courtesy of Nancy Hoffman

#### TAIL

- THIS HORSE IS

  SWISHING HIS TAIL

  AT FLIES.
- He's relaxed and content.



Photo courtesy of en.wikipedia.org

#### TAIL

• A HORSE'S TAIL

THAT IS RAISED OR

SWISHING RAPIDLY

SHOWS ANNOYANCE

AND IRRITATION.



Photo courtesy of <a href="http://www.horseforum.com">http://www.horseforum.com</a>

#### HEAD AND NECK

- THIS HORSE'S HEAD IS RAISED.
- He is alert and is
   RAISING HIS HEAD TO
   BETTER SEE WHAT'S
   IN HIS
   ENVIRONMENT.



Photo from https://15minutehorsefix.wordpress.com/

# HEAD AND NECK

- NOTICE THAT THE MARE IN THIS PHOTO IS HOLDING HER HEAD MORE HORIZONTAL.
- SHE IS RELAXED AND MAY BE RESTING OR EVEN SLEEPING.
- THE FOAL IS SLEEPING.



Photo courtesy of Nancy Hoffman

#### HEAD AND NECK

- A SLIGHTLY LOWERED NECK SHOWS AGGRESSION.
- DURING THIS TIME, THE HORSE
   MAY ALSO WAVE HIS HEAD BACK
   AND FORTH IN A MOTION CALLED
   SNAKING.
- WE SEE THIS BEHAVIOR IN
   STALLIONS WHO ARE FIGHTING
   OR HERDING AN UNCOOPERATIVE
   MARE.



Photo courtesy of <a href="http://www.horseforum.com">http://www.horseforum.com</a>

#### VOICE

HORSES DON'T USE
 THEIR VOICE TOO
 OFTEN, BUT EACH
 SOUND CAN CARRY A
 GENERAL EMOTION
 OR IDEA.



Photo courtesy of <a href="http://www.safehorses.org">http://www.safehorses.org</a>

#### SIGH

Much like A
 Human, A Horse's
 Sighs can express
 Boredom or
 Relief.

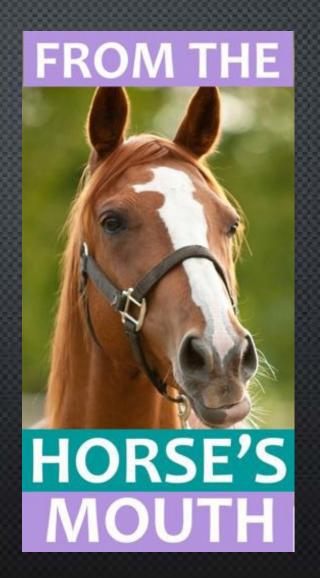


Photo courtesy of <a href="http://www.safehorses.org">http://www.safehorses.org</a>

#### GROAN

• A HORSE'S GROAN
CAN EXPRESS PAIN
OR DISCOMFORT.

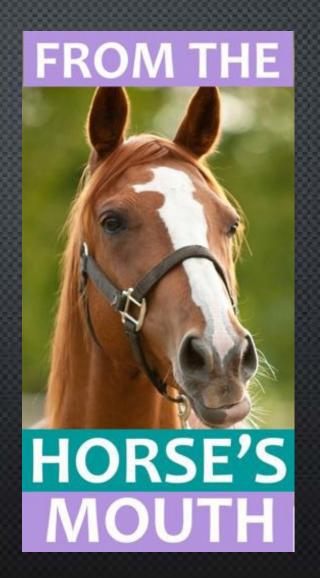


Photo courtesy of <a href="http://www.safehorses.org">http://www.safehorses.org</a>

#### NICKER

- A NICKER IS A SOFT SOUND
- IT'S OFTEN USE TO SHOW RECOGNITION OR WELCOME.
- A MARE MAY USE A

  SOFT NICKER TO CALL

  HER FOAL BACK TO HER

  SIDE.



Photo courtesy of Nancy Hoffman

Click here to hear a Nicker:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4s3VIn2GVac

#### BLOW/ SNORT

- THESE SOUNDS ARE
   CAUSED BY AIR BEING
   FORCED OUT OF THE
   NOSE.
- THEY CAN EXPRESS ALARM.

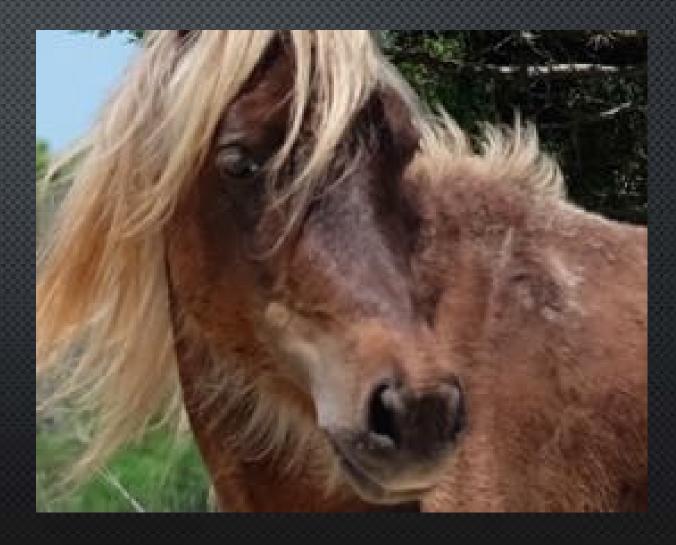


Photo courtesy of Nancy Hoffman

#### SQUEAL

- THIS IS A HIGH-PITCHED SOUND.
- IT IS USED AS A
  WARNING TO "BACK
  OFF!".
- STALLIONS OFTEN SQUEAL WHEN FIGHTING.



Photo courtesy of <a href="https://www.nps.gov">www.nps.gov</a>

### BODY POSITION

• THE WAY A HORSE'S

BODY LOOKS CAN TELL

YOU A LOT ABOUT WHAT

IT'S FEELING.

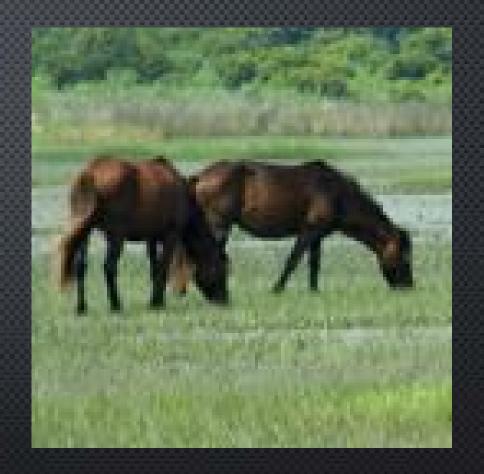


Photo courtesy of www.nps.gov

#### ROLLING

- A HORSE THAT ROLLS IS FEELING VERY SECURE AND HAPPY.
- ROLLING CAN ALSO HELP SCRATCH AN ANNOYING ITCH!



Photo courtesy of www.zoocomedy.com

#### RESTING/ SLEEPING

• THE FOAL IN THIS PHOTO IS RESTING STERNALLY, WHICH MEANS IT IS RESTING ON ITS CHEST (STERNUM).



Photo courtesy of Nancy Hoffman

RESTING/ SLEEPING

 Now the foal is lying LATERALLY, WHICH IS A PERFECTLY NORMAL THING FOR A HORSE TO DO.



Photo courtesy of Nancy Hoffman