



Nevada Wild Horse Range Clark, Lincoln, and Nye Counties, Nevada



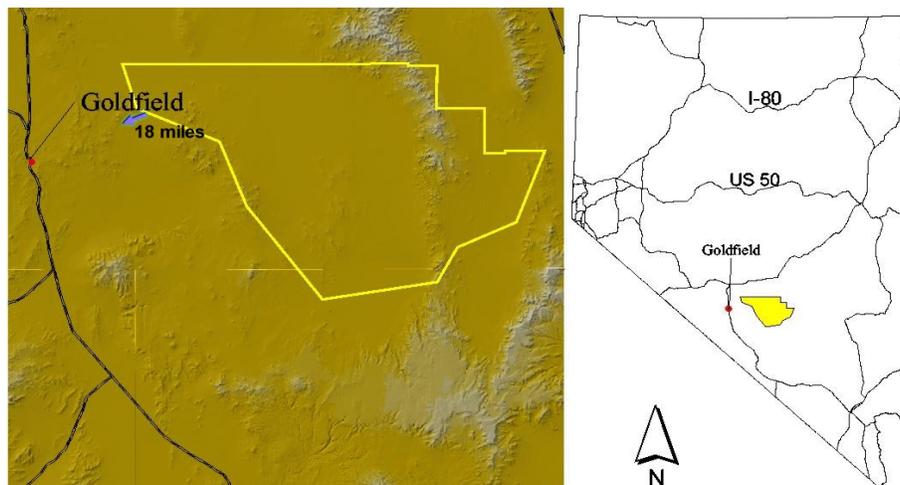
Location/Habitat

The Nevada Wild Horse Range (NWHR) is contained within the northcentral portion of the Nellis Air Force Range (NAFR). The NAFR is located in south-central Nevada in Clark, Lincoln and Nye counties. The NAFR comprises 2,209,326 acres of which approximately 394,000 acres composes the Nevada Wild Horse Range. The Las Vegas District has administrative responsibilities for all land and resource management activities within the NAFR and NWHR.

Permanent water sources consist of springs found at the base of the mountains and the temporary standing water in the playa lakes. The animals sometimes have to travel up to fifteen miles from food to water and back during the drier part of the year. Horses drink at least once each day during the hotter part of the year, but only every second day during the winter and early spring.

Climate in the area is quite harsh, with winter temperatures well below freezing and summer temperature over 100 degrees F. The area has had snow in May and 90 degree heat as late as November 1st. Rainfall averages only 6 and one half inches per year, divided almost equally between summer and winter. Summer rains are localized, short and very intense while winter/spring rains are gentler and over a wider area.

The primary capture area is within, or at the edge of, Cactus Flat, a broad "high" desert valley approximately 20 miles wide and 45 miles long. Cactus Flat is surrounded by low, rocky desert mountains. The valley contains a number of dry lakes, called playas, which are generally bare of vegetation, because of accumulations of alkali salts. These playas can hold rainfall runoff for several weeks and furnish an added source of water for the horses and wildlife found in the area. The horses share the area with pronghorn antelope, desert muledeer, coyotes, fox and mountain lions, as well as many species of small wildlife. Birds include the rare prairie falcon, ravens, quail, starlings, horned larks and many more. Reptiles include many species of lizards and both poisonous (rattlesnakes) and non-poisonous snakes.



Vegetation

Vegetation in Cactus Flat is typical Mojave desert shrub; lowgrowing and able to survive long periods of drought. The vegetation consists of salt-tolerant plants such as saltbush, greasewood and rabbitbrush, with grasses such as galleta grass and Indian ricegrass. The mountains surrounding the valley contain pinyon pine and juniper trees, with an understory of sagebrush and other mountain shrubs and small amount of grass.

Herd Description

The Nevada Wild Horse Range was established in 1962 by a Cooperative Agreement with the Commander, Nellis Air Force Base and the State Director, Nevada Bureau of Land Management. The NWHR was the first wild horse area established in the U.S. and was brought about in answer to pressure from across the nation by thousands of wild horse admirers. While the primary purpose of the Nellis Range Complex (NRC), a complex withdrawn from public use, is weapons development and flight training, the existence of wild horses on the NWHR is a secondary use of the lands. No photographs of the area or visitor access is allowed for National Defense security reasons.

In 1971 Congress passed the Wild Horse and Burro Act and promulgated 43 Code of Federal Regulations 4700 to implement the Wild Horse and Burro Act. In 1977 a five-party agreement was developed for protecting, developing, and managing the natural resources of fish and wildlife, vegetation, watershed, and wild horses with the U.S. Air Force (USAF), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), Department of Energy (DOE), Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and the Nevada Division of Wildlife (NDOW).