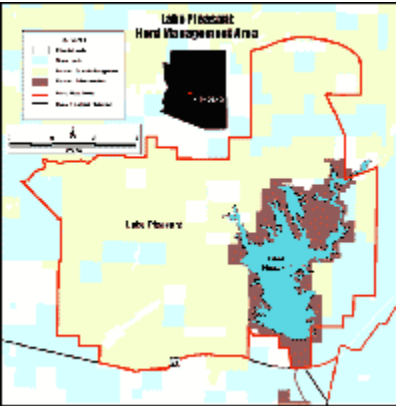


-ARIZONA-

Lake Pleasant Herd Management Area



LOCATION

The Lake Pleasant Herd Management Area (HMA) is located approximately 25 miles northwest of Phoenix, Arizona, in Maricopa County, west of Interstate Highway 17 and north of State Highway 74. The HMA lies northeast of Lake Pleasant.

SIZE

Lake Pleasant HMA consists of 103,000 acres of Sonoran Desert.

HABITAT

The area consists of rugged mountains, numerous small canyons and open rolling hills. The vegetation is typical of the upper Sonoran Desert consisting of palo verde and mixed cacti. Wildlife species include wild burros, desert mule deer, javelina and mountain lions. Other animals found in the area include small mammals, songbirds, amphibians and reptiles.

HISTORY

The existing wild burros are believed to be descendants of pack burros, which escaped or were released during the 1880s and 1890s. This was a period of extensive mining activity along the Agua Fria River and the nearby Bradshaw Mountains. These animals were generally used by prospectors in search of gold, but were also used to pack ore to mill sites located along the Agua Fria River and other free flowing streams in the area, and to haul supplies back into the remote mining camps.

POPULATION

Wild burros evolved in the harsh deserts of North Africa and are very well adapted to a dry desert environment. Left alone in the remote region with few natural predators, the wild burro population flourished. Today the population of burros remains fairly constant at about 250 animals. The burros in this area weigh about 425 pounds and stand about 40 inches (ten hands) high. The majority of the burros in the HMA congregate in or around Lake Pleasant Regional Park due to the abundance of forage and water.

MANAGEMENT

The wild burros of Lake Pleasant HMA are managed in an ecological balance within their habitat to protect the forage. This ensures that there is forage available for the population to remain healthy and viable, yet also allows for forage for livestock and other wildlife. When the wild burro population exceeds the Appropriate Management Level of 250 burros, some animals will be removed and offered to the public through BLM's Adopt a Wild Horse or Burro Program. Another unique management action required in this HMA is caused by Lake Pleasant's fluctuating water levels. A manmade reservoir, Lake Pleasant is part of the Central Arizona Project canal system. This operating reservoir stores and releases water into the canal as needed. During times of high water levels, ridges allowing access to the lake become islands. Burros caught on the ridges when the water rises to higher elevations, may end up trapped on these newly formed islands. If the burros are in danger, or if there is insufficient habitat for survival, a rescue operation is initiated to relocate the burros. In the past, burros have been air lifted out in a sling under a helicopter, or assisted from the island by boat. Rescued animals are relocated to another area within the HMA, or if they require treatment, they are transported to a

corral facility. When they are fully recovered, these burros are offered to the public through the adoption program.

OFFICE CONTACT

For more information, contact the Phoenix Field Office at 21605 N. 7th Avenue, Phoenix, AZ 85027-2099 or call (623) 580-5500.