

## -ARIZONA-

### Painted Rock Herd Area



#### **LOCATION**

The Painted Rock Herd Area (HA) is located in southwestern Arizona. It is 11 miles west of Gila Bend, Arizona on Interstate 8 and 15 miles north of Painted Rock Road. The HA surrounds the Painted Rocks Reservoir.

#### **SIZE**

The HA consists of 38,736 acres of the lower Sonoran Desert.

#### **HABITAT**

Broad desert plains cut by sandy washes and low mountain ranges make up the area. Vegetation consists of palo verde, cacti, creosote bush and sage. The Gila River bisects the northern portion of the HA and is characterized by salt cedar, mesquite, cottonwood and willows. Wildlife includes desert mule deer, javelina, dove, quail, water fowl, and a variety of small mammals, birds, amphibians and reptiles.

#### **HISTORY**

These burros are probably descendants from pack and work animals that escaped or were released into the desert in the late 1800s.

#### **POPULATION**

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 burros survived the intense heat on the coarse vegetation and limited water. Today, the population of burros remains fairly constant at about 50 animals. Burros in this area are typically grey in color and fairly fine-boned. They average about 425 pounds and stand about 40 inches (10 hands) high. During the summer months, the burros congregate along the Gila River for water, forage and shade. In the late fall, the wild burros move back out on the desert and scatter throughout the area.

#### **MANAGEMENT**

The Lower Gila Resource Management Plan Amendment proposed establishing the Painted Rock Herd Area as a management area. Wild Burro populations will be managed to maintain a thriving natural ecological balance with other resources.

#### **OFFICE CONTACT**

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