



Hot Creek Herd Management Area Nye County, Nevada



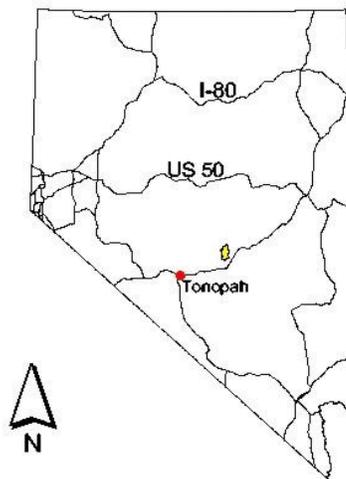
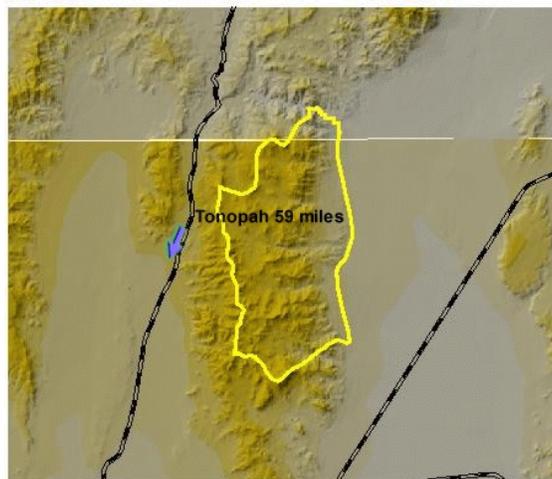
Location/Habitat

The Hot Creek Herd Management Area (HMA) is located 50 miles northeast of Tonopah, Nevada, near the ghost town of Tybo in Nye County. The area consists of 59,740 acres and spans 8 miles wide and 16 miles long over terrain that varies in elevation from 8,975 feet on Amethyst Peak to a low of 6,000 feet at the base of the mountains. The climate is relatively dry, receiving 5 inches of precipitation in the valley bottoms and 16 inches on the mountain tops. Water is a very limited resource and horses often have to walk several miles to drink.

The Hot Creek terrain is mainly mountains with peaks reaching 8,500 feet. The wild horses usually spread out onto the valley floor (and outside of the HMA) during the spring and stay there until winter storms hit. During the winter months, the horses stay in the canyons of the Hot Creek Mountain Range where food, water, and shelter are available.

Vegetation

Vegetation in this area consists mostly of sagebrush and pinyon-juniper woodlands with an understory of Indian ricegrass and Nevada bluegrass. Important species include Indian ricegrass, needle-and-thread grass, galleta grass, winterfat (white sage), fourwing saltbush, and bitterbrush.



Herd Description

Local people claim that the Hot Creek horses were bred for the cavalry. This may explain the predominance of sorrels and bays with very few white markings. It was believed that horses with little white would blend into the background and were less likely to be shot out from under a rider.

A census conducted in 1997 found that approximately 74 percent of the wild horses were outside of the HMA boundary.