



Delamar Mountains Herd Management Area Lincoln County

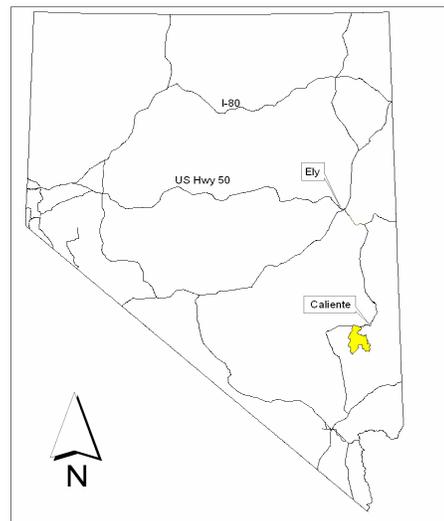
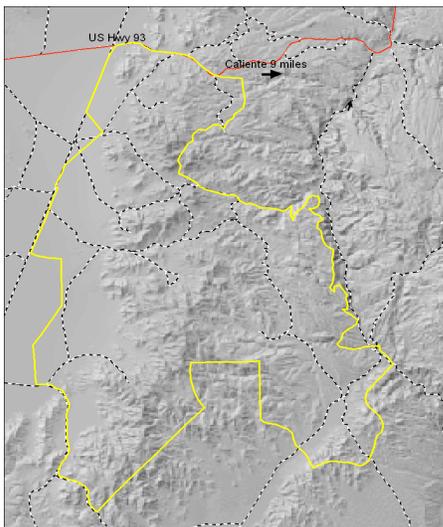


Location/Habitat

The Delamar Mountains Herd Management Area (HMA) is located approximately 10 miles southwest of Caliente, Nevada, in Lincoln County. The HMA comprises 186,138 total acres, 99 percent of which is public land. Three parcels of private land totaling 1,675 acres are located within the HMA boundaries, largely associated with the old mining towns of Delamar and Helene. Most of the HMA covers the Delamar Mountains, for which the HMA is named. The northern-most boundary of the HMA is just south of Highway 93. The HMA transverses south to approximately the Kane Springs Road and includes the northern Delamar Mountains and the eastern portion of the Delamar and Kane Springs Valleys. Meadow Valley Wash functions as the approximate eastern boundary with the Powerline Road bordering on the west. Numerous gravel and two-track roads access a majority of the HMA.

Elevation within the HMA ranges from a high of 8,037 feet on Chokecherry Mountain to a low of 4,102 feet in the bottom of Kane Springs Wash. Permanent water sources consist of many small springs found in the mountains and canyons, as well as water troughs installed for livestock grazing. The animals sometimes have to travel several miles from food to water during the drier part of the year.

Climate in the area is quite harsh, especially as you move south in the HMA. Winter temperatures can drop well below freezing and summer temperatures rise well over 100 degrees Fahrenheit. The area has had snow in May and 90 degree Fahrenheit heat as late as November. Rainfall averages only 8-14 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.



Wildlife in the area include mule deer, coyote, grey and kit fox, and mountain lion. Small wildlife species include jackrabbits, cottontails, and several squirrels and rodents. Birds include the rare prairie falcon, ravens, quail, horned larks, and many more. Reptiles include many species of lizards and both poisonous snakes (rattlesnakes) and non-poisonous snakes.

Vegetation

The northwestern portion of the HMA contains Joshua Tree woodlands. These woodlands also include spiny hopsage, big sagebrush, Douglas rabbitbrush, bud sagebrush, Anderson wolfberry, Nevada ephedra, and smooth horsebrush. Native perennial grasses in this area include galleta, squirreltail, and Indian ricegrass. The introduced annual grasses, cheatgrass and red brome are also well represented.

Mountains in the HMA are characterized by extensive stands of Pinyon-Juniper, interspersed with blackbrush and big sagebrush communities. Secondary shrub species include desert bitterbrush, cliffrose, Gambel's Oak, and Nevada ephedra. Grasses in these areas include galleta, squirreltail, and Nevada bluegrass. Cheatgrass and red brome are present. There are also pockets of remnant Ponderosa Pine in some inaccessible steep terrain in the mountains.

The southeastern portion of the HMA is largely characterized by desert shrub communities. Important shrub species include: Nevada jointfir, creosote bush, white bursage, and blackbrush. Grasses include galleta, desert needlegrass, cheatgrass, and red brome.

Herd Description

The Delamar Mountains HMA is managed by the Ely BLM District for a population of 51 to 85 wild horses which was established in 2003. Emergency wild horse gathers occurred in 1996 and 2000 to reduce the wild horse population and alleviate problems associated with drought. A total of 153 wild horses were removed during those gathers. There is no specific information about the breed of horse that resides in this herd, but the wild horses are likely to be descendants of horses which escaped or were turned loose by ranchers, miners, settlers, and the cavalry remount service. Likely breeds contributing to the herd include Quarterhorse, Arab, Thoroughbred, and several draft breeds. The predominant colors are bay and sorrel, with roans, palominos, buckskins, and other colors also occurring. These horses average approximately 13-14 hands (52-56 inches) tall and weight about 600-800 pounds.

