

12/27/62

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Cub- This is a copy of a BEM news release, of which I have the original which states refuge size of 435,000 acres.

...the conceiver must be a true lover of freedom--one who yearns to extend freedom to all mankind. Halted in animated expectancy or running in abandoned freedom, the mustang was the most beautiful, the most spirited and the most inspiring creature to print foot on the grasses of America"
--J. Frank Dobie

*****news release

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

Lee - Interior 3609

For Release DECEMBER 27, 1962

INTERIOR SETS UP 435,000-ACRE HAVEN FOR WILD HORSES

The "wild" horse--one of the most historically colorful animals of the West-- has been given a 435,000-acre haven in southern Nevada, Secretary of the Interior Stewart L. Udall announced today. The refuge was established in answer to pleas from thousands of admirers of the free-ranging animals, some of whom are thought to be remote descendents of the early Spanish mustangs.

The first publicly owned refuge established for management and protection of wild horses and burros is located in the northeast corner of the sprawling practice range of Nellis Air Force Base northwest of Las Vegas. Supervision of the horse range has been assigned to the Department's Bureau of Land Management.

Cooperative arrangements for the range have been worked out between the commander of the Air Force base, the Nevada State Director of the Bureau of Land Management, and the Nevada Game and Fish Commission. Secretary Udall stressed that this is not a new withdrawal of public lands.

"Preserving a typical herd of feral horses in one of the Nation's most isolated areas may prove difficult, but we will make the effort to assure those of us who admire the wild horse that there will always be some of these animals," Secretary Udall said. "To many people, the wild horse is a symbol of an inspiring era in the West."

The animals ranging on the Nevada area are considered mixtures of the Spanish mustangs, Indian ponies, and domestic horses that have strayed or were abandoned by their owners. Only one generation is needed to change a domestic bred horse to a wild one.

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He explained that there were once hundreds of thousands of wild horses ranging over public lands in the West. Epidemics, starvation, and roundups drastically reduced their numbers so that the Bureau of Land Management now estimates that there are less than 15,000 animals in small, scattered herds.

According to one authority, the wild horse of today could be considered a "feral exotic"--an introduced animal that has gone wild. Although the degree of relationship between the present wild horses and the early Spanish mustangs varies, today's horses probably bear little resemblance to the animals which strayed from Spanish expeditions, missions, and settlements in the 16th and 17th centuries.

While the rugged public lands in this Nevada region--one of the largest roadless areas in the West--may support only a few hundred wild horses, status as a permanent refuge is the first step to assure that at least one wild herd will be preserved, Secretary Udall added.

Indians tamed some of the animals and used them to reign over the West until the coming of civilization--railroads, ranchers, and homesteaders spelled the end of their empire.

Civilization Meant End of Horse Empire

Westward moving civilization meant an end to the way of life of many Indians and their ponies, as domestic livestock and fences made their appearance. By the end of World War I, when many domestic horses were simply abandoned on the range, the strain of Spanish mustangs remained then only as a trace in the bloodlines of wild horses.

Competition for forage on the arid lands of the West heralded the decline of many herds of wild horses. Stockmen took measures to restrict the use of grass to domestic animals.

Roundups of wild horses first began when Indians coveted the fast ponies for saddle animals, and reached a peak when commercial operators entered the picture a few years ago for far different reasons.

Using methods that were not always humane, Secretary Udall explained, roundups sent thousands of the animals to pet food canneries. As a result of some of these practices, a Federal law was passed in 1959 preventing the use of airplanes or motor vehicles in roundups on the public lands. Privately owned lands are under jurisdiction of the States in this respect, Secretary Udall explained.

Not a Showplace for Wild Horses

The new wild horse range in Nevada will not be a showplace for the animals, Secretary Udall said. Scattered in remote areas of the huge range, many of them have never been seen by man--except at a distance--and will probably live out their lives without the touch of a human being.

One of the biggest problems faced by the Department in its search for a suitable refuge is competition between wild horses and other stock. Since the Air Force range is already a military withdrawal where domestic animals are not permitted, wild horses and wild game have shared this area in recent years.

Part of the agreement between BLM and the Air Force assures access for range conservationists during weekend periods when practice firing missions are halted.

With the help of the wildlife specialists from the Nevada Game and Fish Commission, range specialists will inventory available forage for use by wild horses and native wildlife.

Only Wild Horse Refuge

The isolated Nevada tract is the only Federal area set aside for wild horses. A herd which roams Chincoteague Island in Virginia--probably descended from shipwrecked Arabian horses--is not in an area specifically reserved for it. Ponies at Chincoteague, home of the famous "Misty," of books and motion pictures, are owned by the local volunteer fire department but range over parts of the Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge.

Elsewhere in the West, uncontrolled wild horses will continue to remain a source of local and regional controversy. In large numbers, they can sharply reduce the amount of grass available for domestic livestock and for grazing species of wildlife such as antelope. Damage by sharp hooves of the horses is especially high during early spring when soil is still moist from winter snows. During these periods domestic livestock is usually kept off the range, but wild horses continue to graze.

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RECEIVED
Bureau of Land Management
NEVADA LAND OFFICE

REPORT OF INSPECTION OF MUSTANG RANGE

September 6, 1969

Dave Jelter, Malcolm Hamilton, Art Tower, Jim Brenner

10:00
A.M.

OCT 1 1969

NEVADA STATE OFFICE

RENO, NEVADA

We entered the Mustang Range at about 9:00 a.m. from Silverbow on the road in Section 3, T.1S., R.49E. Four antelope were sighted, two just west of Silverbow and two east of Silverbow.

The flat in Section 10-14, T.1S., R.49E., is 4 Artr-Hija (about 12 acres/AIN). We proceeded to Pole Spring which is four miles from the cross roads in Section 14. The rating deteriorates rapidly, going to 30 acres plus. From the tracks, there are about fifty head of horses watering at Pole Spring. The corridor from the flat to the spring is heavily over used. Pole Spring is back in the trees about one mile. In a small open sagebrush area are two springs about 75 feet apart. They consist of pools about 12 feet across and 8 inches to 12 inches deep in the center. They are currently adequate. (If necessary to develop, the area should be fenced with a pole corral. Dip out and place a spring box in each spring, pipe to a reservoir below them.)

We then returned to the cross roads in Section 14 and drove to Tunnel Spring. The range grasses improves in Section 25 (same township and range) and then becomes a 13 Atco-Chvila (40 acres plus) near the spring.

Tunnel Spring was developed in 1967 by BLM. It consists of an old tunnel, partly closed with railroad ties, piped about 100 feet with one inch plastic pipe to a steel trough 18 feet by 2½ feet. A small flow of water is not visible for measuring. A small overflow pit is available but the trough evidently seldom overflows. This installation is satisfactory.

Out on the Test Range, six to eight miles east of the Mustang Range were 60 to 80 horses or cattle, too far away to be sure.

Southwest of Tunnel Spring were 9+7+10+4+1+2 = 33 head of horses. were cattle, one was a lone stud.

Corral Spring is a hole dug into the ground, piped about 750 feet steel trough as at Tunnel Spring. The plastic pipe was broken about 5 feet from the trough and the water (1 gpm) is flowing into a large overflow pit. This is barely satisfactory. A spring box should be installed and the pipe repaired and buried with rocks to protect it.

The little spring 1.4 miles southeast of Corral Spring was not examined.

The vegetation changes from 13 type to 4 type about one and one-half miles south of Corral Spring. In general, the 4 type contains 3-5 per cent grass. Carrying capacity is low.

We then proceeded to Cedar Pass to the trough on the old Wild Horse Ranch pipeline. This line was re-laid (one mile of one inch plastic pipe) in 1967. The trough is dry. There is so little grass in the area that it is recommended that this water not be repaired until 1972 fiscal year.

We proceeded east through Cedar Pass. The mountain to the south is sheer rock and pine trees. Possibly some water exists, but no horse food.

We took the road by "restricted" (on the map) and went south. No road could be found to the first spring marked. The second spring has not been developed but chukkas indicate water is present. There is an old horse trap just north of the first summit, between the two springs. The area has been heavily used by horses in the past, but is not used at present. Possibly this is winter country. Rating is 80-100 Acre/AUM.

We proceeded south to the junction 3.3 miles north of Gold Reed. About 2 miles north of this cross roads the vegetation changes from 4 to 13 type. Carrying capacity doubles immediately. We proceeded north through the 13 type which varies from 5 Acres to 20 Acre/AUM. We went to Cedar Wells. No horses were seen east of Cedar Pass, by the way.

Cedar Wells is a pit from which an ancient steel pipeline goes to a 15'x4' metal trough. There is five feet of water in the pit but the pipeline is dry. It was fixed in 1967. About 200 feet east of the trough is an open 8'x8'x3' pit with sheer sides with about 4' of water in it. This is a hazard. There is little grass in the area and it is weak. The advisability of developing this water is doubtful since cattle from the east would be pulled into the area.

We then proceeded to Cedar Spring. This was an old headquarters, now fallen down. Water can be heard running, probably into the pipeline to Cedar Pipeline Ranch, 8 miles east. The trough below the spring is dry and the trough in the corral is dry. Cattle were seen to the east.

We went to Cedar Pipeline Ranch. The area for two miles around the ranch is mostly halogeton.

We went south[?] east on the Antelope reservoir road. The vegetation improves, finally becoming pure white sage (4 acre/AUM). There are two new reservoirs north of Antelope Reservoir (see map). We proceeded to the big playa south of Lamb Pond, then across southeast. There is a large wire mesh corral on the east edge of the playa. It contained about 25 very good horses, mares and colts, plus three top riding horses. The mares had manes four inches long.