



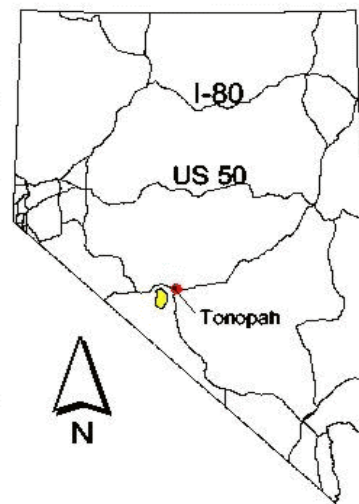
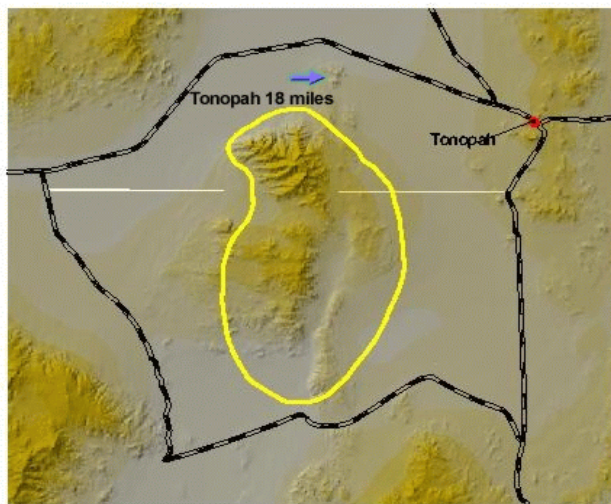
Paymaster/Lone Mountains Herd Management Area



Location/Habitat

The Paymaster/Lone Mountain Herd Management Area (HMA) is located 10 miles west of Tonopah, Nevada, in Esmeralda County. The area consists of 100,675 acres. Precipitation in the region ranges from greater than 12 inches on the top of Lone Mountain to less than 5 inches in the valley near Klondike. Elevations range from 9,108 feet at the top of Lone Mountain to the base of the hill (edge of the HMA) at 4,800 feet. The climate of this region is semi-arid and is described as mid-latitude steppe. Winters are characterized by light to moderate snowfall and cold temperatures. Summers are usually hot and dry. Afternoon thundershowers may occur in late summer and fall. The mean annual temperature in Tonopah is 53 degrees Fahrenheit. January temperatures reach a low of 18 degrees Fahrenheit and July temperatures can reach 92 degrees. The arid nature of the area is expressed in an average annual precipitation of 5.04 inches in Tonopah.

Lone Mountain and associated ridges and hills, and Paymaster Canyon comprise a majority of the HMA. The HMA lies at the southern end of Big Smoky Valley with the Weepah Hills, General Thomas Hills, and Paymaster Canyon to the south. Lone Mountain lies within the Great Basin section of the Basin and Range Physiographic Province. (Information from "Ecological Survey of Lone Mountain Esmeralda County, Nevada.")



Due to the steepness of slope and the vast amount of rock coverings, rock walls, cliffs, and rock piles, a large percent of this HMA is unusable by wild horses. This has resulted in more than 75 percent of the animals leaving the HMA to establish residency outside of its borders.

Water is a limiting factor in this area. Several springs are found at the northern end of Lone Mountain and are generally found around the edge/bottom/foothill where the alluvial fan and the mountain meet. These springs may be associated with faults or dikes. During the 1997 census flight, many of the springs were dry. Many animals which have moved outside the HMA are watering at the Tonopah sewer ponds, in the mining tailing ponds, and in the runoff from the town of Tonopah and the surrounding mines. A majority of the springs are located in steeper canyons and are difficult to access. As a result, wild horses wander outside of HMA boundaries in search of water.

Most of this HMA is habitat to bighorn sheep. Given the type of habitat bighorn sheep typically use, wild horses and livestock cannot use two-thirds of the area.

Vegetation

Vegetation ranges from pinyon-juniper woodlands in the higher elevations to white sage, Bailey greasewood, bud sage, galleta grass, needle-and-thread grass, and Indian ricegrass in the lowlands. Between 100 and 120 Joshua trees grow on the south side of Lone Mountain between 6,700 and 6,800 feet in elevation.

Herd Description

During the 1997 census, one burro and one mule were counted. The burro migrated north into this HMA from the neighboring Montezuma HMA and has established residency adjacent to the town of Tonopah. Where the mule came from is a matter of biology.

These horses have free direct access to the Silver Peak, Dunlap, and Montezuma HMAs. Data indicates a seasonal movement between the Paymaster/Lone Mountain., Silver Peak, and Montezuma HMAs.