

-Arizona-

Alamo Herd Management Area



LOCATION

The Alamo Herd Management Area (HMA) lies in west central Arizona, on lands adjoining Alamo Lake and portions of the Bill Williams, Santa Maria and Big Sandy rivers. This HMA can be reached by driving west from Wickenburg, Arizona, on US Highway 60 (about 50 miles toward Wenden, Arizona), and then north 30 miles on a paved county road toward Alamo Lake State Park.

SIZE

Bordered on the north by the Big Sandy HMA and on the west by the Havasu HMA, the Alamo contains 341,034 acres of land.

HABITAT

The wild burros roam freely throughout the area, which for the most part is steep, rocky and rugged. The lower areas contain gentle slopes cut with broad sandy washes. Sonoran Desert vegetation, such as palo verde and ironwood trees, dominate the washes. Summers are hot, with occasional temperatures exceeding 120 degrees. Wild burros share this habitat with desert bighorn sheep, desert mule deer, coyotes, fox, jackrabbits and a variety of small mammals. Other animals that can be found in the area include reptiles such as the desert tortoise and several species of lizards and rattlesnakes. The area is also home to a variety of birds, including the bald eagle and southwestern willow flycatcher.

HISTORY

Wild burros in this area are descendants of burros abandoned by early prospectors miners or local ranchers. Having evolved in the deserts of North Africa, burros adapted well to the desert environment and flourished in the relatively lush Sonoran desert.

Large thriving herds of burros were soon seen as a threat to other species in times of drought. To reduce the threat, local ranchers were issued government furnished ammunition, in the droughts of 1930s and 1950s, to shoot burros. This helped relieve over utilization of stressed desert vegetation and the severe competition for scarce water.

A new water source was made available with the completion of Alamo Dam on the Bill Williams River in 1968. With a permanent water source, and protection through the Wild Horse and Burro Protection Act of 1971, herd growth accelerated once again.

POPULATION

Left alone in this remote region with few natural predators, the wild burro population flourished to more than one thousand animals by the mid-1970s. The first wild burro capture effort by BLM in Arizona took place near Alamo Lake. In 1977, and again in 1979, nearly 900 animals were removed from this HMA, lowering the population to about 200. Today, the burro population is estimated to be 350.

Burros in this area are typically grey in color, although black and other colors may also occur. During hot summer months, the herd stays within two or three miles of water sources. When the weather cools, the burros tend to break up and scatter throughout the area.

MANAGEMENT

Wild burros in the Alamo HMA are managed in an ecological balance within their habitat. This ensures there will be plenty of food and cover for the burros, as well as for other wildlife. The area must also be managed in a manner that continues to provide a quality riparian habitat for the endangered southwestern willow flycatcher. When vegetative monitoring studies show overutilization of key plant species, some burros will be relocated to corral facilities. These burros will be available to the public through BLM's Adopt a Wild Horse or Burro Program.

OFFICE CONTACT

For more information, contact the Lake Havasu Field Office at 2610 Sweetwater Ave, Lake Havasu City, Arizona 86406, or call (928) 505-1200, toll free (888) 213-2582.