

Fish Creek Herd Management Area

The Fish Creek Herd Management Area (HMA) is located just a few miles south of Eureka, Nevada in the Antelope and Little Smokey Valleys and in the Antelope and Fish Creek Mountains. The area is approximately 252,813 acres in size and is 25 miles wide and 28 miles long. The majority of the HMA is comprised of north-south trending mountain ranges that include all or portions of the Fish Creek Range, the Mahogany Hills, and the Antelope Range. Elevations range from 6,030 feet in the wide valley bottoms, reaching 10,100 feet at Nine Mile Peak.

The colors of the horses in the Fish Creek HMA are predominantly: bay, brown, sorrel, red roan, and blue roan. There are a few buckskin, gray, grulla (mouse color), and palomino horses in the HMA.

The Fish Creek HMA was also the first home of the curly horse. These animals were introduced to Eureka County, Nevada by Tom Dixon in 1874. Some evidence of this bloodline still exists in the horses in the HMA.

During a capture operation, conducted from January 14 through January 28, 1998, 621 horses were captured from within and outside the boundaries of the HMA. 479 of the horses that were captured were transported to Palomino Valley Center north of Sparks, Nevada for preparation into the adoption program. The remainder of the horses were released back inside the HMA. The gathered horses included many sorrels, red and blue roans, black, brown, white, and gray horses. A total of 11 curly horses, and two appaloosas were captured.

Drought emergency gathers were conducted in 2000 and 2004 before the Appropriate Management Level was established that would have allowed a comprehensive gather to take place. A total of 600 wild horses were captured and removed from the range in 2000 to prevent death due to starvation and lack of water. An additional 55 wild horses were removed in 2004 for the same reasons.

The AML for this area was established in 2004 at 107-180 wild horses. Gathers were conducted in July 2005 and February 2006 to achieve the AML. A total of 309 wild horses were removed during these gathers. Observations since the gathers indicate that the rangeland vegetation is recovering from the past overuse by wild horses. The current population estimate for the HMA is 79 wild horses. Wild horses are known to move between the Fish Creek HMA and Seven Mile HMA, located south of the Fish Creek HMA.