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# Coso Range

*Endangered Desert Legacy*



**Location:** The Coso Range area is located in the Mojave Desert, in Inyo County, east of Olancho. The Coso Range is located to the east of Highway 395 and to the south/southeast of Owens Lake and Highway 190 (the portion between Olancho and the T-intersection with 136/190). Highway 190 (the portion that enters Death Valley National Park) and the Malpais Mesa Wilderness lie to the northeast. This area, located in the Centennial Flat area, lies to the north of the existing Coso Range Wilderness.

**Management Agency:** Bureau of Land Management, Ridgecrest Field Office

**Description:** The landscape of this area consists of volcanic formations and numerous valleys and washes. From high points, such as Joshua Flat, visitors to the area are treated to great views east into the Sierra Nevada and the Owens Valley. Vermillion Canyon also offers a scenic trek. Elevations range from about 3,600 feet to about 4,750 feet.

**Wildlife and Plants:** The Coso Range is habitat for many species including the protected golden eagle, the endangered least Bell's vireo, the threatened Mohave ground squirrel and western snowy plover, and various species of special concern, such as Le Conte's thrasher, mountain plover, Owens Valley vole (photo above), pallid bat, and spotted bat. The Coso Range was previously home to the desert bighorn sheep; suitable habitat still remains in the area. The species has returned to the Conglomerate Mesa area, nearby. The area also has large stands of Joshua trees mixed with low desert shrubs, creosote, annuals, and cacti.

**Activities:** The Coso Range petroglyphs (i.e., prehistoric rock art) are renowned by scholars as some of the most important Native American rock art in the world, and thus have long caught the attention of researchers and visitors to this area (see photo above). In the western part of this area, on the edge of Owens Lake, is a location that is thought to have had historic trails and possibly even village sites.

This area is frequented by those interested in Native American history, campers, hikers, nature enthusiasts, bird watchers, photographers, and others seeking to enjoy the beauty and solitude of nature. Routes near the Coso Range Wilderness are also favorites among off-roaders.

