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Nopah Range

Endangered Desert Legacy



Location: The Nopah Range area is located in the Mojave Desert, Inyo County, east/southeast of the town of Shoshone and north/northeast of the towns of Tecopa Hot Springs and Tecopa. The area is located south of Highway 178, east of Highway 127 and north of the Old Spanish Trail. This area also lies to the south/southwest of the existing Nopah Range Wilderness.

Management Agency: Bureau of Land Management, Barstow Field Office

Description: The soils in this area are intensely multicolored, with red, black, grey, green, white and other hues. The area is essentially a series of braided washes pouring southwest into the Amargosa River that runs south through the area. Elevations range from about 1,300 feet to about 2,200 feet.

Wildlife and Plants: Due to the existence of water, a vast multitude of species make this area their home. The endangered Amargosa nitrophila, Amargosa vole (photo above), least Bell's vireo, and western yellow-billed cuckoo can be found here. The threatened desert tortoise and protected desert bighorn sheep and golden eagle are not uncommon visitors to this area. A portion of this area has been designated as critical habitat for the Amargosa vole (photo above). The area has also been recognized as a wildlife migration corridor by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. A wildlife migration corridor is an area that connects wildlife populations that have been separated, due to human activities or structures. Corridors help avoid inbreeding and may help to re-establish populations that have been reduced or eliminated due to random events such as fire or disease.

Other species of special concern can be found here, including the Amargosa Canyon speckled dace, Amargosa pupfish (photo above), Crissal thrasher, gray vireo, mountain plover, pallid bat, prairie falcon, summer tanager, vermilion flycatcher, western snowy plover. Wild burros and horses also make this area their home. The area's landscape is dotted with creosote, cacti, yucca, and other desert shrubs.

Activities: This area is enjoyed by campers, backpackers, hikers, equestrians, nature enthusiasts, bird watchers, and others seeking to enjoy the solitude and beauty of the area. Geology lovers and photographers enjoy visiting the area due to its colorful rock formations and sands. Scientists have found more than 95 species of trilobites in this area.

