

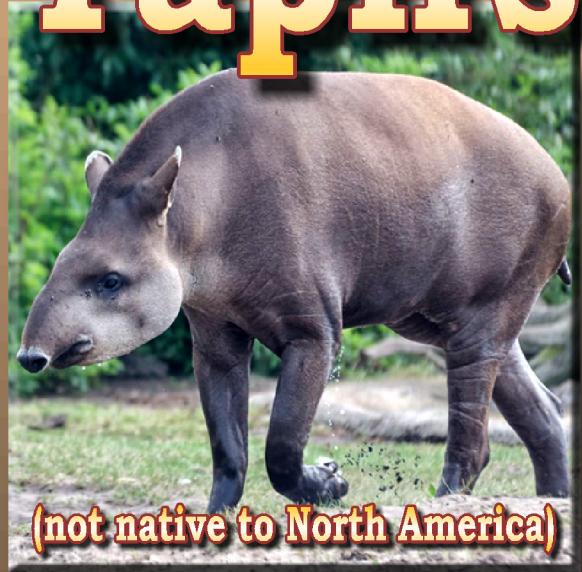
PERISSODACTYLA

(Odd-Toed Ungulates)

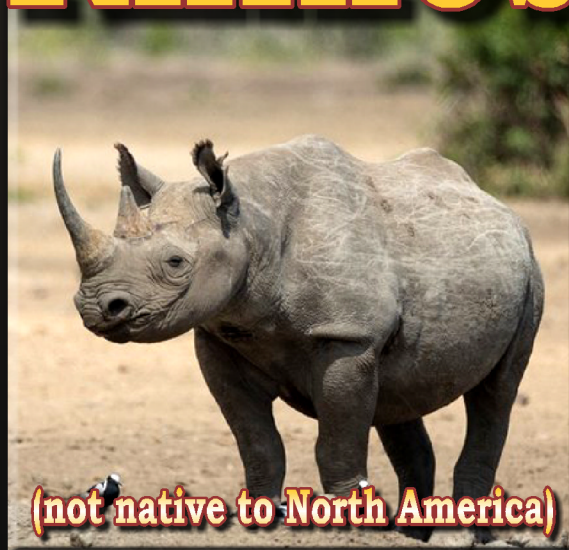
Equines



Tapirs



Rhinos



Family EQUIDAE (Horses)

Mustang (*Equus ferus caballus*)

Measurements:

Average: Height: 5' Length: 8" Weight: 930 lbs

Distinguishing Field Characteristics:

large size; very diverse coat colors and markings; long facial profile with eyes positioned laterally on head; thick mane and tail; **one-toed** hooves; genders similar (females generally smaller)

Notes:

uncommon; social (small familial herds); diurnal; roam free in w NA; possess excellent dichromatic eyesight (largest eyes of any land mammals), good hearing, sense of smell; prehensile upper lip; height measured in **hands** (4 inches) to **withers** (ridge between shoulders); length measured chest to rump; herbivorous (mainly grasses); lifespan of 25-30 years

Mojave presence: feral



always alert

Big Wash Rd; Chloride, AZ



thick mane, tail

Big Wash Rd; Chloride, AZ



Dolan Springs, Arizona



Dolan Springs, Arizona



out with friends



foaling around



family stroll



a special moment

Comments:

By definition, "wild" horses are those whose ancestors were never domesticated. Therefore all free-roaming horses today are **feral** domestic horses, except perhaps the very rare **Przewalski's** in Mongolia. Feral horses in western North America, called **mustangs**, are descendents of those that escaped or were set free (e.g. from miners, ranches, etc.) and adapted to living in the wild. The horses shown here were all encountered at various times since 2016 in the desert surrounding the Goodsprings, Nevada, area.



browsing around



checking me out

Family EQUIDAE (Mules) Mules (*E. ferus caballus* -- *E. Africanus asinus*)



horse-like foreparts

South Rim; GCNP; AZ



donkey-like hindparts

South Rim; GCNP; AZ

Measurements:

Average: Height: 5' Length: 7" Weight: 850 lbs

Distinguishing Field Characteristics:

medium-large size; foreparts similar to the male parent, hindparts resemble the female parent; variable coat color, but usually brown overall; long ears; **one-toed** hooves; genders similar (females generally smaller)

Notes:

rare to non-existent in the wild; social; diurnal; cosmopolitan; primarily bred as a pack/draft animal (can easily carry up to 200 lbs dead weight), for farming, military situations, etc.; herbivorous (mainly hay, grasses, etc.); lifespan of 30+ years

Mojave presence: domestic

Comments:

While mules are not animals one would typically find in the wild, they are included here as an educational reference, being artificially induced matings of a horse with a donkey/burro. These hybrid offspring of horses and donkeys have 63 chromosomes--between the 64 of horses and 62 of donkeys--and thus are usually sterile, although there are a few documented records of fertile females. The offspring of a male donkey (**jack**) and a female horse is called a **mule**. Mules are docile, intelligent, trainable, and willing to work. Contrarily, the offspring of a female donkey (**jenny**) with a male horse is called a **hinny**. Hinnies are the stubborn ones! Unfortunately for mules, they got blamed for the hinny's bad temperament. I guess "stubborn as a hinny" just didn't have the same clout, and never caught on, so mules took the rap! Common as they are in domestic environments, don't expect to encounter a herd of free-ranging mules in the Mojave--as hybrids, mules are almost always sterile, and thus cannot maintain a sustainable population in the wild. Nevertheless, if one does manage to find itself in the wild, the mule is a hardy, resourceful, and resilient animal that can survive the rigors and challenges of the desert.



Because of their amenable temperament and endurance, mules are ideal for ferrying adventurous travelers through the steep canyon...a great way to descend to the river--and even better for the arduous trek back! But if you're hiking, remember, the mules have the right of way; step to the **inside** and let them pass. These shots were captured on a beautiful October day in 2017 at the South Rim of **Grand Canyon NP**.



typical brown coat

South Rim; GCNP; AZ



unusual white coat

South Rim; GCNP; AZ

Family EQUIDAE (Asses)

Somalian Wild Ass (*Equus africanus somalicus*)



no shoulder stripes

Clark Mtn; Mtn Pass; CA



large, erect ears

Halloran Spgs; nr Baker, CA

Measurements:

Average: Height: 4' Length: 5" Weight: 500 lbs

Distinguishing Field Characteristics:

medium size; horse-like appearance; unmarked, gray-brown coat; pale belly; **zebra-like stripes** on legs; **one-toed** hooves; genders similar (females generally smaller)

Notes:

rare; solitary or small herds; diurnal; native to ne Africa (Somalia, Eritrea, Ethiopia), endangered in the wild, modern descendents in w US escaped or were set free from miners or ranchers in the late 1800s; subspecies of **African Wild Ass** (*Equus asinus*); lifespan of 12-15 years

Mojave presence: feral



typical habitat

Halloran Spgs; nr Baker, CA



small family groups

Halloran Spgs; nr Baker, CA

Comments:

This donkey subspecies and the one on the following page--called burros in the sw US--are actually descendents of the domesticated versions of the original African Wild Ass populations in East Africa, of which few remain in the wild.

Somalians occupy the same habitat and range as their close cousins, the Nubians (page 5), but are far less common. They also look very similar at first glance, so are easily unrecognized as a different subspecies. In the field, the best differentiation is the lack of cross stripes on the shoulders, as demonstrated by the individuals above wandering in the desert off of Interstate-15 in the **Mojave National Preserve** near Clark Mountain in June, 2016, and Halloran Springs near Baker, California, in July of 2019.

While Somalians are typically characterized by zebra-like stripes on their legs, this feature is not always present in modern herds due to genetic diversification and isolation from their purer lineage in Africa. To date, the groups shown here are the only ones I've encountered in the Mojave.

Family EQUIDAE (Asses)

Nubian Wild Ass (*Equus africanus africanus*)

male



Red Rock Cyn NCA; Nevada

showing off...



...and proud of it!

Red Rock Cyn NCA; Nevada

Measurements:

Average: Height: 4' Length: 6" Weight: 500 lbs

Distinguishing Field Characteristics:

medium size; horse-like appearance; variable coat colors; white belly, inner legs, muzzle; dark nose, long ears, short mane; dorsal **longitudinal stripe** intersected by **lateral stripe** across both shoulders, forming a cross when seen from above; **one-toed** hooves; genders similar (females generally smaller)

Notes:

common; social in small familial herds; diurnal; probably extinct in its natural habitat; originally imported by Spaniards in 1600s, modern decedents escaped or set free from miners or ranchers in the late 1800s found in rangelands throughout w US; subspecies of **African Wild Ass** (*Equus asinus*); forage on variety of plants

Mojave presence: feral

Comments:

In the 1980s, burros were much more conspicuous along the road to the **Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area**, waiting for free handouts. But that was long before the phenomenal growth of Las Vegas in the 2000s. With millions of visitors to Vegas each year, the situation for both burros and people became much more dicey, thus feeding the animals became unlawful. Those who ignore the posted warnings signs are rewarded with a pricey souvenir! **Note:** male called a **jack**; female, a **jenny**.

The former gold mining town of Oatman, AZ, survives today as a tourist attraction for visitors who come mainly to see the burros that run the place. On the left, the mayor took time to closely inspect me for contraband (actually, he was looking for a handout, knowing that I had a stash of grapes and mango slices at the ready). At right, the usual street gathering of tourists and locals.

female



Red Rock Cyn NCA; Nevada

knocked up again!



Beatty, Nevada

