

Mustangs Help Patrol U.S. - Mexico Border



"Tex" with Senior Border Patrol Agent Bobby Traweek. Tex is a 5 year old palomino gelding from the Nevada Buck and Bald herd management area. This picture was taken at the Santa Teresa Border Patrol Station in Santa Teresa, NM - El Paso sector.

With all the high tech efforts to safeguard the borders you might be surprised to learn old fashioned horse patrols are still quite effective. The mounted border patrol agents are beginning to ride mustangs on the Northern and Southern borders of the United States.

Mustangs are inherently strong and excel in endurance. They also have very few problems with their hooves and legs. Mustangs are basically the breed of "survival of the fittest"; Mother Nature at its best. It turns out this American breed brings special skills to the job, said the Border Patrol.

This "symbol" of the Old West is a modern day member of the Border

Patrol's mounted force. This breed is especially well adapted for the work they are required to do.

"All of our mustangs can move up a trail at a good pace. ATV's can't get up there. Trucks can't get up there." said Bobby Traweek, U.S. Border Patrol ranger. "They have a better immune system and better bone structure. They have larger hooves than your average domestic horse."

Mustangs run wild over the rugged terrain in ten western states. The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is the government agency that is responsible for controlling the wild populations by gathering them from the public rangelands when an over-population exists and offering them to the general public to adopt. The BLM is mandated to ensure that no degradation of the range happens. They also have to monitor forage and water availability for the mustangs, wildlife and other users of the public ranges.



"Tony" with Senior Border Patrol Agent Bobby Traweek. Tony is a 4 year old buckskin gelding from the Wyoming White Mountain herd management area. This picture was taken at the Santa Teresa Border Patrol Station in Santa Teresa, NM - El Paso sector.



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"We're lucky to have these two mustangs. It's two more that have found good homes and excel at their work," said Traweek.

There are only a few mustangs working along the U.S. - Mexico Border Patrol, but the agency is hopeful it will be able to add more wild horses as it beefs up their mounted patrol units. Their wild past makes mustangs especially vigilant.

"They'll perk up their ears or they'll stop and alert the ranger when there are problems. It makes it a lot easier for us, said Jesus Arevalo, U.S. Border Patrol. "They may have a mountain lion chase them or a bear chase them, but due to their survival instinct, the mustang knows exactly how to respond."

The wild horses can sense a smuggler hiding in the brush or a person called a "border bandit".

In addition to all the other positives, the mustangs cost about

half of what the Border Patrol is used to paying for horses that patrol the border.

At present, the Southern Border Patrol has four mustangs working on the U.S. - Mexico border in the El Paso and Del Rio area. Seventeen additional mustangs have been adopted to assist patrolling the Northern border of Canada. All of the mustangs were trained by inmates and staff at the [Colorado Wild Horse Inmate Program](#).



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