



**U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service**  
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**PROGRESS REPORT**  
**December 2004 through September 2005**

ACTIVITY	GOALS	PROGRESS/STATUS	NEXT STEPS
DTRO Staffing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hire 3 local desert tortoise recovery coordinators</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Desert Tortoise Recovery Coordinator began work in DEC 2004</li> <li>Local coordinators began work in Carlsbad and Ventura, CA, and Reno, NV, in APR and MAY</li> </ul>	N/A
Range-wide Monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct spring 2005 range-wide monitoring surveys</li> <li>Conduct data analysis and report on monitoring conducted to date</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Spring 2005 surveys completed. Surveys were expanded to gather additional information on habitat and threats</li> <li>SEP 9: Monitoring Implementation Committee meeting (FWS, MDEP, UNR, USGS) to coordinate analysis and reporting of monitoring conducted to date</li> <li>Funding provided by California Desert District, BLM, to support analysis and reporting of the 2001-05 data, as well as for transect surveys on BLM land in 2006</li> <li>Quality Control/Assessment (QC/QA) for 2004 data is complete</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>End NOV: complete QA/QC for 2001-05</li> <li>End JAN: draft summary report of density results (less conclusions &amp; recommendations)</li> <li>JAN 27: MIC meeting to draft conclusions &amp; recommendations</li> <li>Winter/Spring 2006: managers' forum to discuss monitoring results and direction of the program</li> <li>Additional analyses and program review during 2006</li> </ul>
Data Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop MOU between DOD MDEP, Redlands University, &amp; UNR to establish master database for all desert tortoise data</li> <li>Develop protocols for structure, maintenance, access, &amp; distribution of database</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DEC 30 meeting w/ UNR</li> <li>MOU has been delayed while database planning continues among the partners. Primary database needs have been identified, scoped among Service field offices, and an outline of the various components envisioned has been produced</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue working on database refinement</li> <li>Meet with relevant parties to identify roles in database development</li> <li>Finalize MOU</li> </ul>
Science Advisory Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recruit 6 scientists to fill SAC</li> <li>Coordinate with recovery plan revision process</li> <li>Revise recovery criteria</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The SAC is established and a 7th member, an epidemiologist, joined the team in AUG.</li> <li>MAY 16-17: desert tortoise researchers provided an update on current research; reviewed role in recovery plan revision</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DEC 9-10 meeting in Tucson</li> <li>JAN 20-21 meeting in Las Vegas</li> <li>Continue developing recovery objectives and criteria; identify research needs and recovery</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• JUL 21-22: drafted an outline for the recovery plan revision process that emphasizes collaboration between the SAC and regional recovery planning work groups; recommended research questions to evaluate the success of the Ft. Irwin translocation project; and began reviewing recovery objectives and criteria.</li> <li>• SEP 30-OCT 1: finalized recommendations for Ft. Irwin translocation; finalized recommendations for threat assessments by regional work groups; continued developing recovery objectives and criteria</li> </ul>	actions
Recovery Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish Recovery/ Implementation Work Groups</li> <li>• Revise/amend Recovery Plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A process for establishing the work groups was developed and presented at the MAR 2005 Desert Tortoise Council Symposium and mailed to stakeholders and partners.</li> <li>• Further resolution of work groups in Nevada, Utah, and Arizona occurred at the Desert Tortoise MOG meeting on JUN 29.</li> <li>• The California (DMG) work group met on MAR 28, MAY 12, and AUG 3 and has been focused on defining the recovery action planning process.</li> <li>• In AUG, the DMG formally invited representatives from Defenders of Wildlife, the Center for Biological Diversity, QuadStates County Government Coalition, and OHV interests to join its work group; these entities have expressed direct interest in the recovery plan process and/or have participated directly in DMG activities. All accepted the invitation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Secure facilitator for regional workshops and/or to facilitate overall recovery plan revision process</li> <li>• Identify additional stakeholders to participate in the process</li> <li>• Initiate recovery action planning within regional workgroups</li> </ul>
Coordination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue twice-annual MOG/ stakeholder meetings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DEC 9: A MOG/stakeholder meeting was held to discuss future strategies for implementing desert tortoise recovery actions, including the formation of the DTRO.</li> <li>• JUN 29: Bob Williams discussed the role of the DTRO, and Roy Averill-Murray gave an update on the recovery planning process. The MOG made recommendations of how to best organize the work groups for Utah and Arizona.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue participation in MOG/stakeholder meetings.</li> </ul>

### **Recently Completed Tasks**

- A MOU has been developed by the DMG between DOD and DOI for implementing desert tortoise actions in California. Implementation of the MOU will provide for a more coordinated effort for both funding and monitoring activities on all DOD and DOI lands.
- The DTRO continues to participate in Ft. Irwin Conservation/Mitigation Working Group meetings to coordinate desert tortoise translocation prior to expansion of the National Training Center.
- The DTRO continues working with partners in evaluating new roles and objectives for the Desert Tortoise Conservation Center (DTCC) in Clark County, Nevada, to better integrate regional land management and desert tortoise research and recovery objectives, especially with regard to management of tortoises cleared from development and the best use of those tortoises for research and recovery purposes.
- The DTRO has been coordinating with contractors, university and government scientists, and project proponents on the Coyote Springs Investment development in Clark and Lincoln counties, Nevada, to identify appropriate avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures, including potential research, for the project. Similar efforts have also begun for a separate HCP in Lincoln County.
- The DTRO has participated on the Clark County Technical Advisory Group in providing technical review of conservation management strategies for four Desert Wildlife Management Areas in the county. To date, documents listing knowledge gaps pertinent to the species and individual regions have been reviewed. Draft strategies are expected in the upcoming quarter. These strategies will play an important part in the development of regional recovery action plans, discussed above.
- The DTRO has assumed lead in recovery permit review, in coordination with the regional office and field offices. Significant review and coordination during the current quarter include those in conjunction with the Ft. Irwin translocation project, in preparation for field activities this fall. Minor reviews of various other permits have also been conducted.
- The DTRO participates in the DMG Desert Tortoise Information and Education Project, focused on building public and stakeholder awareness of tortoise issues and tortoise recovery. Implementation of the 3-year project began in January 2005. Coordination and implementation of the outreach program is in progress, including the creation of a Tortoise Outreach Coordinator position.

### **Other Activities Linking Land Management Decisions with Research Results**

- In conjunction with the DMG, the USGS is doing a study to evaluate the effectiveness of past recovery actions, specifically actions related to off-road vehicle management, cattle and sheep grazing, and construction of tortoise fences. The draft has been completed, and a final is forthcoming.

- Members of the Desert Managers Group signed a memorandum of understanding to prepare an environmental assessment (EA) for a raven management plan in California. Public scoping has been completed, and a draft EA is currently being prepared. California Department of Fish and Game is also heading up an effort to develop and implement a feral dog management program in the California deserts. A survey has been initiated to determine whether public and wildlife safety is at possible risk and to determine in what areas of the desert these encounters with dogs are occurring.