



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
 DESERT TORTOISE RECOVERY OFFICE
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PROGRESS REPORT
January through March 2007

ACTIVITY	GOALS	PROGRESS/STATUS	NEXT STEPS
DTRO Staffing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fill 2 local desert tortoise recovery coordinator positions in CA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An applicant has accepted the Carlsbad position. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advertise and fill the second CA position
Recovery Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revise Recovery Plan (details can be found on the DTRO website) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> JAN 18: The MOG reviewed the proposed strategy for revising the recovery plan and agreed on a general process to complete a draft plan by SEP 2007. MAR 7-8: CA Recovery Planning Work Group reviewed current threat and recovery action information from which to base new recovery action plans at a subsequent workshop. MAR 22-23: AZ-NV-UT Recovery Planning Work Group conducted the same exercises as above. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MAY: Regional meetings to develop recovery action plans
Science Advisory Committee (SAC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordinate with recovery plan revision process Revise/develop recovery criteria 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FEB 10-11: The SAC reviewed a habitat model and spatial analysis conducted by USGS/UNR for use in focusing recovery criteria, modified draft recovery criteria, and began discussing disease-related priorities and recommendations. FEB 24: DTRO chaired a session at Desert Tortoise Council Symposium on recovery planning, including 2 presentations by SAC members (conceptual foundations for recovery criteria and a vital rate sensitivity analysis). MAR 31: The SAC agreed on a suitable habitat model from which to focus recovery efforts, reviewed 2 genetics studies and began consideration of revising recovery units, and continued disease discussions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review recovery units Develop conceptual framework to describe assumptions on which recovery criteria are based and define important terms Forum with MOG to discuss recovery criteria Identify disease research and management recommendations Identify other research needs Review monitoring program relative to recovery criteria
Desert Tortoise Management Oversight Group (MOG)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effective coordination of agency planning and management activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> JAN 18: The MOG reviewed a draft charter and discussed membership of the group, agreeing to expand to include county government officials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revise charter Provide input into recovery plan revision

<p>Range-wide Monitoring</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare for and implement 2007 surveys • Develop study plan to guide monitoring program • Secure long-term funding agreements for the monitoring program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distributed threat report from 2005 monitoring surveys. • Obtained funding and secured contractors for 2007 monitoring surveys. • MAR 26-30: Monitoring training workshop conducted in Las Vegas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct 2007 surveys. • Develop draft study plan outline • Establish contract with USGS-Patuxent for retrospective analysis of occupancy
<p>Recovery Data Management</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish master database for all desert tortoise data • Develop protocols for structure, access, and maintenance of database 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JAN 12: DTRO met with FWS and BLM staff and individuals with the Mojave Desert Ecosystem Project (MDEP) and the Redlands Institute (RI) to discuss the goals and objectives of the FWS-BLM-NPS “Listed Species Consultation and Recovery Information Tracking System” project and how MDEP and RI might be able to assist. • Established <i>deserttortoise.gov</i> to begin developing a web portal for inter-agency and public dissemination of desert tortoise information/data in coordination with MDEP and RI. • DTRO has been coordinating with RI staff and others to develop a recovery decision support system as part of the recovery planning process and which will be integrated with or be a part of the recovery database. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet with relevant parties to identify roles in database development • Integrate database with website

Other Activities

- The DTRO continued to coordinate with the Ft. Irwin Conservation/Mitigation Working Group (CMWG) on desert tortoise translocation prior to expansion of the National Training Center. Proposals for translocation research and monitoring will be reviewed in April.
- DTRO participated in planning efforts for several upcoming small translocations in southern Nevada and Arizona.
- The DTRO continued working with partners, including Clark County, on issues related to the Desert Tortoise Conservation Center (DTCC). DTRO participated in discussions related to operation and management of the DTCC, reviewed draft protocols provided by Clark County’s contractor, and worked to secure pen space for tortoises important in research and recovery efforts as well as improve temporary holding pens.
- The DTRO continued as lead in recovery permit review, in coordination with the regional office and field offices.
- DTRO staff member along with researchers from the University of Nevada-Reno and USGS published a study on translocation of desert tortoises. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.biocon.2006.11.022>