



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
 DESERT TORTOISE RECOVERY OFFICE
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PROGRESS REPORT
October through December 2006

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"> The Recovery Coordinator based in Carlsbad, CA, moved on to another position with the Carlsbad Fish and Wildlife Office, leaving both CA positions vacant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recruit and re-fill both positions
Recovery Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revise Recovery Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DTRO drafted updated strategy (available on the DTRO website) for revising the recovery plan based on results of the US Institute for Environmental Conflict Resolution's Feasibility Assessment, given feedback from the Desert Tortoise Management Oversight Group (MOG) that 1) additional funding for the fully collaborative process described in the assessment is unavailable, and 2) a revised draft plan is needed prior to the assessment's target of March 2009 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> JAN 18: MOG meeting to discuss recovery plan revision strategy
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"> Preparation for FEB 10-11 meeting, including coordination with USGS on preparation of the habitat model and with USGS and University of Nevada, Reno, on the spatial analysis of tortoise observations from 2001-2005 range-wide monitoring DTRO organized a session for the upcoming Desert Tortoise Council Symposium on recovery planning, including 2 presentations by SAC members (conceptual foundations for recovery criteria and a vital rate sensitivity analysis), a USGS presentation on the habitat model, and others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FEB 10-11: Conclude development of draft recovery objectives and criteria; incorporate USGS habitat model and spatial analysis Develop conceptual framework to describe assumptions on which recovery criteria are based and define important terms Forum with MOG to discuss recovery criteria Refine threat analysis process Identify disease research and management recommendations Identify research needs Review monitoring program relative to recovery criteria

<p>Range-wide Monitoring</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct data analysis and report on monitoring conducted to date • Prepare for 2007 field season • Develop study plan to guide monitoring program • Secure long-term funding agreements for the monitoring program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OCT 13, DEC 1: Desert Tortoise Monitoring Committee meetings continued 2007 preparation • OCT 24: Summary report of 2001-05 range-wide monitoring completed and distributed • NOV 1: Coordinated with Desert Managers Group (DMG) on funding for 2007 monitoring in CA – reduced funding is available compared to 2005, which will impact the number of transects and precision of estimates in 2007 • Coordinated with Clark County and University of Nevada, Reno, on contract (through Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act) for monitoring program, including training workshop for range-wide monitoring and surveys within southern NV • First draft of report on spatial analysis of threats (data collected during monitoring) completed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secure funding from DMG agencies, Clark County, and other sources • Secure contractors for field surveys • Prepare/conduct training workshop • Develop draft study plan outline • Complete and distribute report on spatial analysis of threats based on 2005 data • 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"> • Coordination and planning of the FWS-BLM-NPS project to develop a “Listed Species Consultation and Recovery Information Tracking System” is pending other workload • Continued coordinating with Mojave Desert Ecosystem Program (MDEP) and Redlands University to establish a web portal for inter-agency and public dissemination of desert tortoise information/data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet with relevant parties to identify roles in database development • Coordinate with MDEP to establish <i>deserttortoise.gov</i> • 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.
- The DTRO continued working with partners, including Clark County, in evaluating new roles and objectives for the Desert Tortoise Conservation Center (DTCC), 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 continued to participate in the DMG Desert Tortoise Information and Education Project (DTI&E).

- The DTRO continued to participate in the DMG Raven Working Group to assist with developing an Environmental Assessment and implementation of management actions to address raven predation of juvenile tortoises.
- The DTRO continued to participate in meetings with the FWS Ecological Services field offices and environmental groups to address concerns and issues in the California/Nevada Mojave and Colorado Desert regions.
- The DTRO continued as lead in recovery permit review, in coordination with the regional office and field offices.