



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
DESERT TORTOISE RECOVERY OFFICE
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PROGRESS REPORT
April through June 2008

| ACTIVITY | GOALS | PROGRESS/STATUS | NEXT STEPS |
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| 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">• After concurrence from Regions 2 and 6, the draft plan was forwarded from the Region 8 office to Washington for approval prior to release for public comment through Federal Register. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• AUG: Publish notice of availability in Federal Register• 90-day public comment• Publish final revised plan• Establish regional Recovery Implementation Teams |
| Science Advisory Committee (SAC) | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Coordinate with recovery plan revision process | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• On hold, pending release of draft revised recovery plan | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Follow-up subsequent to or during public comment period |
| 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">• On hold, pending release of draft revised recovery plan | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Next meeting TBD• Circulate charter for agency signatures |
| Range-wide Monitoring | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reporting on 2007 surveys• Develop study plan to guide monitoring program• Secure long-term funding agreements for the monitoring program | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A second draft of 2007 monitoring results has been received by DTRO from project cooperators.• Continued development of monitoring plan and associated SOPs, including field methods, training, and data handling draft sections using written materials developed and implemented in 2008.• MAY 28: Quarterly report on monitoring program at meeting of funding entities for western part of the range (Desert Managers Group) 2008 field season completed.• JUN 10: Debriefing meeting held to begin planning and improvements for 2009.• Continued negotiation on annual funding agreement for eastern part of range; low funding levels for western part had noticeable impact on planning and implementing improvements to monitoring program in 2008. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Complete annual report on 2007 monitoring results• Finish quality assurance and database for 2008 field data• Complete internal draft and initiate external review of long-term monitoring plan• Continue to seek secure funding from DMG agencies and other sources |

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| <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"> • Continued to coordinate with Redlands Institute 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. • MAY 22: In collaboration with the Redlands Institute, DTRO conducted a workshop for using structured spatial decision support methods at the 2008 U.S. Institute for Environmental Conflict Resolution Conference. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to meet with relevant parties to identify roles in database development • Work with regional agency teams to update database of threats/recovery actions • Integrate database with website |
| <p>Recovery Action Implementation</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish regional Recovery Implementation Teams (RITs) • Develop detailed recovery action plans • Implement recovery action plans; track and report progress utilizing the recovery decision support system • Monitor effectiveness of recovery actions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developed draft terms of reference for the RITs, which have been sent to the regional office for review. • DTRO is co-lead with the Ventura Fish and Wildlife Office on the implementation of a raven management program in CA, for which environmental documentation was recently completed. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Once the recovery plan has been finalized, RIT members will be appointed and teams organized • Intra-Service consultation required for raven management program; working group will meet quarterly |
| <p>Recovery Permit Administration</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead recovery permit review, in coordination with Region 8 and field offices | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued to coordinate activities on a total of 14 active permits. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • |
| <p>Desert Tortoise Conservation Center (DTCC)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manage the DTCC as an integrated part of the recovery program • Work with partners to ensure proper care of tortoises | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • APR 8-9: The Conservation Centers for Species Survival (“C2S2” – a group of 5 zoological institutions) visited the DTCC and provided recommendations on immediate and long-term improvements to the facility. • MAY 18-20: DTRO attended C2S2’s annual meeting to discuss further the potential of C2S2 becoming a partner in operating the DTCC. • Work continues under an agreement between Clark County and FWS for the care of tortoises brought to the DTCC as part of the MSHCP. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to implement changes to DTCC husbandry protocols • Meet with C2S2 and other partners to discuss a new operating MOU for the DTCC • Arrange for a DVM to provide tortoise health assessment training for personnel at DTCC • Work with BLM to implement SNPLMA planning project for DTCC upgrades |
| <p>Status Review</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete a 5-year review of the status of the desert tortoise | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MAR 5: Initiation of 5-year review published in Federal Register. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • |
| <p>Technical support and guidance for decision-making</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop information syntheses, guidance and protocols, and apply Service and partner programs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Translocation recommendations • Survey protocols • Renewable energy guidance: assembled current state of knowledge relative to the recovery of endangered | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All are in the development phase • Continue to coordinate with the Bureau of Land Management and various state governments on renewable energy issues |

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| | | <p>and threatened animals and plants and developed FWS priority conservation areas map within the CA deserts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recovery crediting program development | |
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Other Activities

- The DTRO continued to coordinate with the Ft. Irwin Conservation/Mitigation Working Group (CMWG) and research cooperators on desert tortoise translocation prior to expansion of the National Training Center. Coordination with and among research teams continued through implementation of the Southern Expansion Area translocation. Planning for the Western Expansion Area translocation has also begun.
- The DTRO continued participating in the California Desert Managers Group quarterly meetings. The DTRO also participates in and provides technical input to the Information and Education Workgroup, the Conservation Land Acquisition Workgroup, and the Raven Management Workgroup.
- The DTRO continues to coordinate with and provide technical support to the FWS Ecological Services field offices on various issues.