



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
DESERT TORTOISE RECOVERY OFFICE
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PROGRESS REPORT
July through September 2006

ACTIVITY	GOALS	PROGRESS/STATUS	NEXT STEPS
Recovery Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Revise Recovery Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• AUG 15: Management Oversight Group (MOG) reviewed draft recovery criteria concepts developed by the SAC• AUG 15: US Institute for Environmental Conflict Resolution (USIECR) and Center for Collaborative Policy (CCP) presented preliminary results from stakeholder assessment at MOG meeting• SEP 26: USIECR/CCP Feasibility Assessment identified conditions that should be met prior to proceeding with a full collaborative process: 1) establish a broadly accepted/scientifically credible information base, and 2) confirm availability and commitment of adequate funding/staffing resources to support the proposed collaborative process	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reevaluate and continue developing recovery planning process, based on assessment report
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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">• SEP 16-17: SAC reviewed and addressed comments on the draft recovery criteria from the MOG and other stakeholders, further refined the recovery criteria, and reviewed status of knowledge of desert tortoise disease issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• FEB 10-11: Finalize recovery objectives and criteria; incorporate USGS habitat model and DTMC 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 • Develop study plan to guide monitoring program • Secure long-term funding agreements for the monitoring program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JUL 26: Report to Desert Managers Group (DMG) on priorities for 2007 monitoring and associated funding needs • AUG 15: Report to MOG on finalization of summary report, priorities for monitoring in 2007, and commitment to phased development of a study plan for the monitoring program • AUG 16, SEP 15: Desert Tortoise Monitoring Committee (DTMC) meetings focused on program review and 2007 sampling strategy/ preparation • Summary report of 2001-05 range-wide monitoring completed and undergoing USGS policy review • Report in progress on spatial analysis of threats based on data collected during monitoring • Coordinating with USGS-Patuxent to conduct retrospective occupancy analysis of 2001-05 data and to provide general recommendations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OCT 13, DEC 1: DTMC meetings to continue 2007 preparation • NOV 1: DMG meeting to secure funding commitments for monitoring in California in 2007 • Distribute final summary report from 2001-05 • Distribute draft threat report from 2005 • Establish contract with USGS-Patuxent • Develop draft study plan outline
<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 • 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 continues 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 continues 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. A “master plan” for the new facility was completed. A pre-proposal planning funding request for a feasibility study of the various options and architectural designs of the selected option is under review.
- The DTRO continues to participate in the DMG Desert Tortoise Information and Education Project (DTI&E).

- The DTRO continues 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 coordinated with BLM, FWS, and USGS personnel in all four desert tortoise range states on priorities for post-fire habitat restoration research. An inter-agency funding proposal was submitted to the Southern Nevada Public Lands Management Act in AUG.
- The DTRO continues 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 continues as lead in recovery permit review, in coordination with the regional office and field offices.