



Desert Tortoise (*Gopherus agassizii*)



- ❖ Federally protected as Threatened by the Endangered Species Act.
- ❖ Official state reptile of California! Soft scaly body with a hard shell. Could be green, grey, tan, or brown. Only 1.5 inches in diameter after hatching, but up to 1 foot in diameter as adult.
- ❖ Desert Tortoise protection at Edwards AFB is mandated by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Biological Opinion: "Operations and Activities at Edwards Air Force Base, California" (8-8-14-F-14).
- ❖ Unauthorized collection, handling or harassment can be prosecuted: Fines up to \$50,000 and/or 1 year imprisonment.
- ❖ Often looks like a moving rock and hard to spot!
- ❖ Spends over 90% of its life underground in burrows.
- ❖ Most active in Spring and Fall but possible to see all year-round especially after a rain.
- ❖ Attracted to water. Often seen where puddling occurs during or after a rain (like road shoulders).
- ❖ Found throughout the Mojave and parts of the Sonoran Desert.

If tortoise found in immediate danger (on the road), and it is safe to do so, please move it:

Approach slowly from the front

Carefully lift tortoise by the sides with 2 hands and keep level

Move tortoise at least 100 feet away, in the shade, in the same direction it was going.

Call
412 CEG/CEVA
661-277-1417
661-277-1401



How you can protect the Desert Tortoise

- Do not handle a tortoise unless it is on the road and in immediate danger.
- If a tortoise is on the road in immediate danger, you may move the tortoise off the road.
- Check under parked vehicles and equipment before moving or operating.
- Keep vehicles and equipment on existing or approved roads and staging areas.
- If tortoise is sighted in project area, call 412 CEG/CEVA. Observe from a distance.
- Do not attract ravens. Ravens are a major predator of the Desert Tortoise. Keep trash in raven-proof containers. Make sure lids are tightly closed. Do not feed the wildlife!
- Ensure water tanks and trucks are free of water leaks that might attract predators.

