

THE DESERT TORTOISE

California's State Reptile

The desert tortoise is fully protected under the Federal and State Endangered Species Acts. Vandalism, harassment, killing, or collecting should be reported immediately to CALTIP, your local Sheriff's Office, or a BLM Ranger.

CALTIP 800-952-5400

or

BLM 714-383-5652

(for legal violations only)

This brochure is provided as a public service by:

THE MOTORCYCLE INDUSTRY
COUNCIL



U.S. BUREAU OF LAND
MANAGEMENT'S

California Desert District
SPORTS COMMITTEE DISTRICT 37
AMA, INC.

DESERT TORTOISE PRESERVE
COMMITTEE, INC.

For Further Information Please Contact:

Desert Tortoise Preserve Committee

P.O. Box 453
Ridgecrest, CA 93555
818-797-0739

California Turtle and Tortoise Club

P.O. Box 90252
Los Angeles, CA 90009
714-962-0612

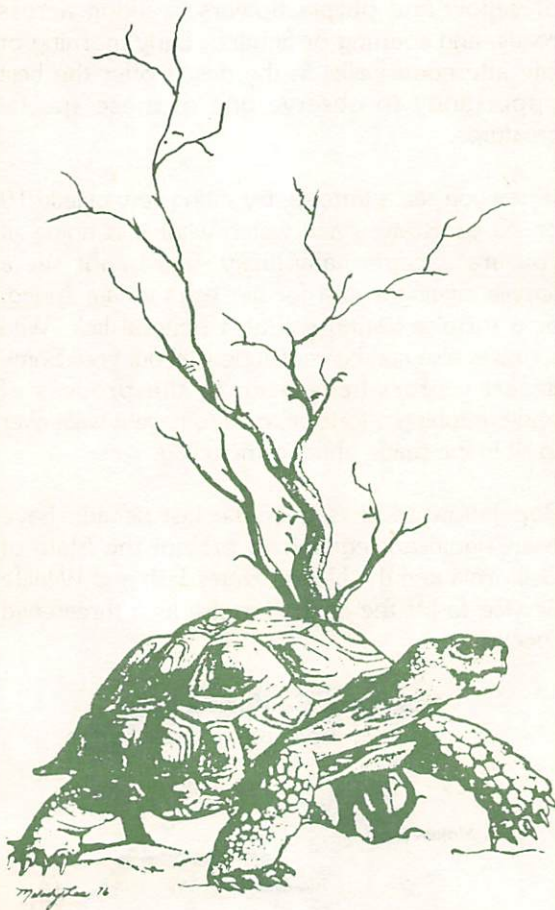
BLM California Desert District

1695 Spruce Street
Riverside, CA 92507
800-446-6743

Sports Committee District 37 AMA, Inc.

5764 Campo Walk
Long Beach, CA 90803
213-438-6527

PLEASE



Desert Tortoises Need Your Help!

THE DESERT TORTOISE

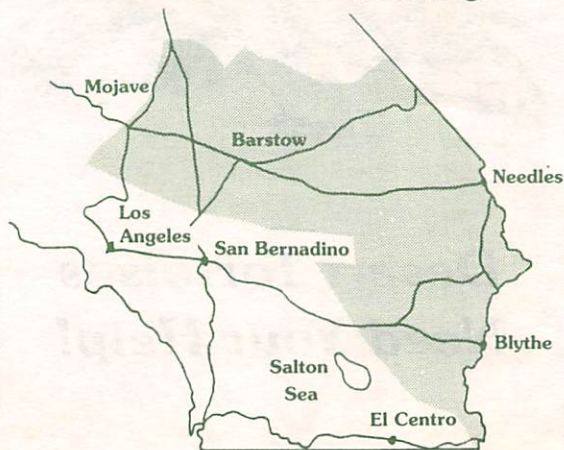
After four years of drought conditions, the desert tortoises' food supply of wildflowers and other vegetation is very sparse. However, you may still see tortoises emerging from their underground burrows to search for food. In good years, you would likely see tortoises munching away in fields of yellow and purple flowers, walking across roads, and courting or fighting. Early morning or late afternoon walks in the desert offer the best opportunity to observe one of these special creatures.

When you see a tortoise, try sitting very quietly 10 or 20 yards away and watch what it is doing. If you are exceptionally lucky, you might see a female digging a nest for her eggs in late spring, or a tortoise eating soil at a mineral lick. Wild tortoises also can be very curious about you. Some desert visitors have been in the process of photographing a tortoise, only to have it walk over to sit in the shade of the camera bag.

Population declines over the last decade have been significant enough to prompt the State of California and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service to list the desert tortoise as a threatened species.

Southern California Map

Shaded area indicates tortoise range



REMINDERS

You can be part of our efforts to reduce the declines by remembering a few key points and sharing them with your friends and family:

- The desert tortoise is fully protected by State and Federal laws and must not be disturbed, collected, killed, or harassed. If someone takes a tortoise from the desert, please notify CALTIP (see reverse) or any law enforcement agency.
- If you have a pet tortoise at home, PLEASE NEVER RETURN IT TO THE DESERT. Captive tortoises may carry diseases fatal to wild tortoises, and tortoises that have spent anytime in captivity have little chance of re-adapting to the wild. If you need to find a new home for your tortoise, call BLM's tortoise line (800-446-6743) or the California Department of Fish and Game (714-597-8235).
- If you see a tortoise on the road and it is in imminent danger, move it carefully off the road about 50 yards in the direction it was traveling. Make sure you keep the tortoise level, as if it were walking along. Since each tortoise has its own home range or activity area with several burrows and feeding areas, it is important not to move it beyond its home range. If the tortoise is removed from familiar territory, it will use up precious stores of energy trying to return home. Displaced tortoises are also more vulnerable to predators and overheating.
- When you are camped or parked, check under your car before driving away. Sometimes a tortoise will sit under a car or trailer in the shade and can be inadvertently crushed.
- All California residents and visitors are responsible for learning about and respecting regulations that protect our desert wildlife and resources.
- Follow local regulations about off-highway travel and camping.
- Above all, enjoy your experience with desert tortoises. They have lived in the California Desert for millions of years and with your help can continue as part of the desert scene for many more.