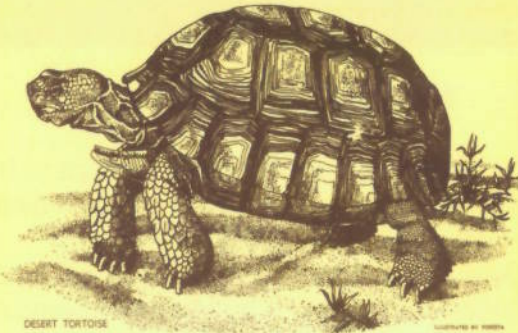


# HANDS OFF PARTNER



**PROTECTED BY LAW!**

DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

Environmental Management has tortoise care and feeding information available to anyone interested. It can also provide a list of qualified veterinarians in the event your tortoise becomes ill.

## DOs

- Call Environmental Management at (661) 277-1401 for information on adopting or turning in a pet tortoise.
- Observe tortoises in their natural desert habitat. Take pictures.
- Watch for desert tortoises crossing the road.
- Check under vehicles for desert tortoises before driving.
- Dispose of trash properly to keep ravens, from flourishing.

## DON'Ts

- Release pet tortoises in the desert.
- Drive off-road (unless in a designated off-road area).
- Remove tortoises from the desert.
- Pick up or touch tortoises.

## For more information contact:

Environmental Management Directorate  
5 East Popson Avenue  
Building 2650A  
Edwards AFB, CA 93524-8060  
(661) 277-1401

*Special thanks to the California Department of Fish and Game for the use of their "Hands Off Partner" poster.*

Produced by AFFTC/ITA Graphics 22323

# THE DESERT TORTOISE ON EDWARDS AIR FORCE BASE



The desert tortoise is a unique native of the Mojave Desert. A cold-blooded reptile, a desert tortoise can live 70 or more years. It digs burrows to live in and to escape from the desert's seasonal temperature extremes. Burrows are half-moon in shape and may reach 30 feet in length.

Tortoises begin reproducing at 15 to 20 years of age. Females lay from 1 to 15 eggs each year. However, only about five out of every 100 hatchlings survive to adulthood. With a young tortoise's very thin shell, they are vulnerable to predators, the most common being the raven.



Since the tortoise was listed as a federally threatened species in April 1990, it is everyone's responsibility to ensure its safety and future survival. As a threatened species, the desert tortoise is protected under the Endangered Species Act. It is against the law to "harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture or collect" desert tortoises. Anyone attempting to engage in such behavior is subject to criminal and civil penalties up to a \$50,000 fine and one year in jail.



### EDWARDS AIR FORCE BASE'S ADOPTION PROGRAM

The Environmental Management Directorate maintains a list for people wishing to adopt a tortoise that was in captivity prior to being listed as threatened. Contact Environmental Management at (661) 277-1401 to get more information. Current adoptive families no longer wanting a pet tortoise, facing a permanent change of station (PCS), or retiring from service should contact the Directorate so the tortoise can be placed with a new family.



### TORTOISE REGISTRATION

All on-base captive tortoises need to be registered at Environmental Management.

This will allow the Environmental Management biologists to distinguish pet tortoises from wild tortoises, which wander into base housing from time to time.

This program saves the lives of wild tortoises. A major cause of death for wild tortoises is upper respiratory tract disease. Many experts believe this disease comes from contact with captive tortoises or humans.