

Desert Tortoise E-Mail Info 2/22/07

C,

I understand your frustration. The organizations who are working to recover the desert tortoise are only beginning to centralize information on the web. One website that has information about the status of the species I would recommend is the US Fish and Wildlife Service's Desert Tortoise Recovery Office (<http://www.fws.gov/nevada/desert%5Ftortoise/>). On that site are links to the [General Accounting Office's December 2002 audit of recovery actions for the Desert Tortoise](#) (external link) and the [October 2004 Desert Tortoise Recovery Plan Assessment](#).

The desert tortoise, being a animal that lives for 75-100 years which does not breed until they are about 15 and stays underground over 30% of the year, is very hard to monitor for population size and change. Scientists have been sampling the population to estimate the population size and determine whether the population is stable, decreasing or increasing. They have been using a method called line distance sampling since about 2000. The data should be available soon at the website above.

In 1994, the USFWS completed the Recovery Plan for the species (see website above) and designated critical habitat for the species. 6,446,200 acres in Ca, NV, UT and AZ were designated as critical habitat. The BLM manages 1,085,000 acres of that land in Nevada, all within 1.5 hours drive from Las Vegas. USFWS is currently preparing to update the Recovery Plan. That document will be available for public review when it is completed, and will consolidate what we have learned since 1994 and provide direction for future recovery actions.

I hope this information helps you.

Respectfully,
Carrie Ronning
Desert Tortoise Council

c> wrote:

To Whom It May Concern:

I live in Las Vegas, NV and Desert Tortoise Protection is certainly a concern here, especially with the constant growth we have been experiencing.

I became interested in the Desert Tortoise recently because of development being approved that reduced their land by 1%. It got me curious about how much land was allocated to Desert Tortoises and how many there are.

Unfortunately, I have been surfing the web all morning and haven't been able to find out how many tortoises there are, or how many there use to be, or anything on their populations. Obviously, I am looking in the wrong spots but I am close to giving up. So here I am!

Where can I find this information? Is there a magazine article, or report or something that could tell me how many are left? How many are gone?

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

C