

ADAMS BROADWELL JOSEPH & CARDOZO

A PROFESSIONAL CORPORATION

ATTORNEYS AT LAW

601 GATEWAY BOULEVARD, SUITE 1000
SOUTH SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94080-7037

TEL: (650) 589-1660
FAX: (650) 589-5062

lmiles@adamsbroadwell.com

SACRAMENTO OFFICE

520 CAPITOL MALL, SUITE 350
SACRAMENTO, CA 95814-4721

TEL: (916) 444-6201
FAX: (916) 444-6209

DANIEL L. CARDOZO
THOMAS A. ENSLOW
TANYA A. GULESSERIAN
JASON W. HOLDER
MARC D. JOSEPH
ELIZABETH KLEBANER
RACHAEL E. KOSS
LOULENA A. MILES
ROBYN C. PURCHIA

FELLOW
AARON G. EZROJ

OF COUNSEL
THOMAS R. ADAMS
ANN BROADWELL
GLORIA D. SMITH

August 5, 2010

DOCKET	
08-AFC-13	
DATE	<u>AUG 05 2010</u>
RECD.	<u>AUG 05 2010</u>

California Energy Commission
Attn: Docket Office, 08-AFC-13
1516 Ninth Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Calico Solar; Docket No. 08-AFC-13

Dear Docket Clerk:

Please process the enclosed CURE EXHIBIT 439, 2008 and 2009 Annual Reports for the Fort Irwin Translocation Project, conform the copy of the enclosed letter, and return the copy in the envelope provided.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

/s/

Carol N. Horton
Assistant to Loulena A. Miles

LAM:cnh

Fort Irwin Annual Report

Contents

Biological Opinion 1-8-95-F-16R	3
Biological Opinion 1-8-03-F-48/Desert Tortoise Permit TE-102235-3	6
Biological Opinion 1-8-00-F-78	14
Biological Opinion 1-8-05-F-43	14
Biological Opinion 1-8-03-F-47	14
Literature Cited	15

Appendices

- A – Berry et al Health and Disease Annual Report 2008**
- B – Jacobsen and Berry Desert Tortoise Annual Report 2008**
- C – Berry et al WEA Annual Report 2008**
- D – Esque et al Fort Irwin Desert Tortoise Translocation Project Annual
Report 2008**
- E – Boarman et al Desert Tortoise Research and Surveys in the Southern and
Western Expansion Areas of Fort Irwin 2008 Summary Report**
- F – APHIS Predator Management Report 2008**
- G – Lane Mountain Milkvetch Report 2008**

B.O. # 1-8-95-F-16R

As per the Biological Opinion for the Army’s Current Mission at the National Training Center, Fort Irwin, California, we are providing a table of all desert tortoise encounters by Fort Irwin personnel during calendar year 2008 (Table 1) including the number and types of tortoise takes. For calendar year 2008, there were 13 desert tortoise encounters, including carcass sightings, within the original boundary of Fort Irwin (Table 1). This figure includes six (6) sightings where the animal was not in harm’s way and no actions were taken to relocate the animal, five (5) carcasses incidentally observed during various survey efforts and two (2) relocations by authorized biologists where the tortoise was moved greater than 100 meters from its original location. All tortoises listed as “relocated” were in good general health and none voided as a result of handling or relocation.

Table 1. Desert tortoise encounters by DPW staff on the NTC & Fort Irwin in 2008.

UTM coordinates reported in Zone 11, NAD 83

Date	Easting	Northing	Type	Relocated to
4/6/2008	532589	3906008	Relocated	532547 3906128
4/26/2008	553104	3908358	Sighting	
4/28/2008	523036	3901102	Carcass	
4/28/2008	527034	3895764	Carcass	
6/12/2008	504163	3895462	Sighting	
“summer” 2008	Not recorded		Carcass	
9/30/2008	523525	3889950	Relocated	523560 3889861
9/30/2008	90 gridline		Sighting	
9/30/2008	90 gridline		Sighting	
10/9/2008	522015	3890198	Carcass	
10/15/2008	Not recorded		Sighting	
11/17/2008	Not recorded		Sighting	
11/26/2008	Not recorded		Carcass	

Summary of 2008 Survey and Monitoring Efforts

- On March 3, 2008 the Sitting Bull Restoration Area was surveyed for desert tortoise and other sensitive species. The entire Sitting Bull Restoration Area polygon was surveyed by walking north-south transects in 30 meter intervals. There were no desert tortoise burrows or sign throughout the Sitting Bull Area. The Restoration Area was mostly devoid of vegetation, and consequently there was a lack of wildlife activity. There was no sign of desert tortoise or of sensitive species (Mojave fringe toed lizard, burrowing owl). Therefore, the Sitting Bull Restoration Area was deemed clear for ground disturbing activity.
- On March 9th, 2008 Fort Irwin biologists performed a survey for desert tortoises (*Gopherus agassizii*) at ITAM’s proposed road improvement site, Yermo. The survey was conducted according to United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) protocols for the desert tortoise. There was no desert tortoise sign observed during the survey. The areas surveyed varied from slightly impacted to highly impacted. There is a small

potential that tortoises may wander into the areas during the project. No other sensitive plant or animal species were observed.

- On June 20th 2008 three Fort Irwin biologists surveyed a section of land adjacent to Fort Irwin Road prior to the construction of a truck bypass route. The proposed road was 14 feet wide and approximately 2.5 miles long. The survey followed United States Fish and Wildlife Service protocol. No tortoises were seen. Multiple burrows were noted but none housed tortoises. Monitoring has continued on this project since June and no tortoises have been sighted.
- On October 15th through the 17th 2008, Fort Irwin biologists surveyed the proposed site for installation of three wind energy turbines. Surveys were conducted to analyze all plant and animal species on the site. Surveys were particularly focused on desert tortoise (*Gopherus agassizii*) and Lane Mountain milkvetch (*Astragalus jaegerianus*) that could potentially be found at the site. The survey followed United States Fish and Wildlife Service protocols. The survey area was approximately 20 hectares, covering the project location and a buffer zone around the proposed area of activity. After careful evaluation it was determined the area did not contain any sensitive species and that no biological constraints would prevent the addition of wind turbines and access roads at this site.
- On November 3rd and 4th 2008 Fort Irwin biologists conducted a preliminary survey at the intersection of Live Fire Ranges 16 and 19 where a new Military Operations in Urban Terrain (MOUT) site has been proposed. The estimated area of impact covers almost 1900 acres. Since the area was previously highly disturbed the survey focused on the undisturbed areas most likely to contain desert tortoises. Five areas of 100x100 meters were surveyed. No desert tortoises were seen however some possible burrows were sighted. A more intensive survey will occur prior to construction when more information about the project becomes available.
- On December 4th and 5th 2008 three Fort Irwin biologists surveyed the proposed Route B, a one mile long road connecting the main Fort Irwin reservation with the western expansion area. United States Fish and Wildlife Service survey protocols were used and no desert tortoise burrows or sign were sited. As part of the Route B project, an adjacent existing road will be widened. A three mile stretch of land associated with this aspect of the project was surveyed. Three possible desert tortoise burrows (unoccupied) were identified. Fort Irwin biologists will continue to monitor this project through completion of construction activities.
- On 16 December 2008 two Fort Irwin biologists accompanied Operations Group personnel through the western expansion area to determine a biologically feasible route for a Stryker unit road march from Fort Irwin to Southern California Logistics Airport (SCLA). This activity will occur on February 18 and 19, 2009 during Rotation 09-04. No desert tortoises were encountered or are expected to be affected by this activity. All participating personnel will be briefed regarding the desert tortoise and Fort Irwin biologists will precede the road march to insure no desert tortoises are harmed.

This biological opinion requires any disturbance to desert tortoise critical habitat south of the 90 Grid Line be reported. In association with the ongoing desert tortoise translocation project being executed in lands south of the 90 Grid Line (the southern expansion area or SEA), a number of activities occurred during 2008. Desert tortoises south of the 90 Grid Line, previously translocated, were translocated to one of 11 translocation plots south of Fort Irwin. Prior to being translocated, all tortoises were subjected to a health assessment including drawing blood to test for exposure to disease. All tortoises exhibiting severe clinical signs of disease or testing ELISA suspect or positive were left in the SEA. Additionally, disease pens were constructed on suitable desert tortoise habitat south of the 90 Grid Line. The intent of these pens is to house those tortoises exhibiting severe clinical signs of disease or testing ELISA positive or suspect. Subject to completion of translocating all tortoises from the SEA (lands south of the 90 Grid Line) it is Fort Irwin's plan to begin training activities on these lands.

Recommendations – This biological opinion covers lands encompassed by the original Fort Irwin boundary. A separate biological opinion covers lands acquired through the Fort Irwin land expansion project. Following completion of the Fort Irwin translocation project recommend this biological opinion be revised to incorporate all Fort Irwin lands under one biological opinion.

B.O. # 1-8-03-F-48
Desert Tortoise Permit TE-102235-3

The Fort Irwin Biological Opinion for the Proposed Addition to Maneuver Training Lands at Fort Irwin, California requires the Army to report the details on each desert tortoise that is found dead or injured within the new training areas at Fort Irwin or at translocation sites and report any conservation actions taken for the desert tortoise and the Lane Mountain milkvetch. The expansion areas are not currently available for military training (pending completion of all environmental documentation) and are being managed in a manner consistent with Bureau of Land Management desert wildlife management area protocols. The following desert tortoise translocation project activities took place this year:

- Total injuries and mortalities of all uniquely-identified tortoises involved in the Fort Irwin Translocation Project are presented in Table 2. Two hundred (200) mortalities and six (6) injured tortoises were recorded during 2008.

Table 2. Mortalities and injuries of uniquely-identified desert tortoises at Fort Irwin in 2008.

Tortoise ID #	Date of Observation	Easting	Northing	Status	Cause of Death or Injury
37	9/21/2008	527378	3887993	dead	other
40	9/11/2008	527412	3887947	dead	unknown
46	5/4/2008	529588	3889880	dead	unknown
55	3/5/2008	537922	3880072	dead	canid
890	8/11/2008	526203	3888812	dead	necropsy
2005	10/2/2008	521937	3871953	dead	unknown
2009	3/28/2008			dead	canid
2037	1/13/2008	533496	3887222	dead	unknown
2047	5/16/2008			dead	canid
2524	5/6/2008	528176	3887615	dead	canid
2528	5/8/2008	518269	3880163	dead	canid
2549	7/8/2008	521700	3871001	dead	unknown
2562	3/25/2008			dead	canid
2574	7/14/2008			dead	canid
3001	4/8/2008	522181	3866117	dead	unknown
3002	1/14/2008	522419	3865647	dead	canid
3004	1/14/2008	519596	3866959	dead	natural
3006	5/5/2008	508690	3886521	dead	canid
3009	6/3/2008	518512	3881296	dead	canid
3011	4/3/2008	518451	3882108	dead	natural
3018	10/2/2008	554219	3884078	dead	canid
3024	7/15/2008	519451	3870144	dead	canid
3028	6/30/2008	523288	3864844	dead	canid
3029	1/14/2008	522785	3866440	dead	canid
3032	9/3/2008	512048	3882102	dead	canid

3036	4/3/2008	509792	3880830	dead	canid
3038	3/26/2008	513428	3877544	dead	unknown
3047	1/15/2008	513414	3879184	dead	unknown
3063	1/16/2008	532746	3886473	dead	unknown
3067	1/15/2008	512938	3877984	dead	unknown
3068	2/13/2008	512542	3877760	dead	canid
3070	6/30/2008	537416	3879271	dead	canid
3077	7/27/2008	520594	3873389	dead	canid
3082	5/23/2008	509624	3880096	dead	canid
3094	2/12/2008	512270	3883139	dead	unknown
3095	4/3/2008	509509	3880646	dead	canid
3098	5/5/2008	508533	3879771	dead	canid
3101	3/28/2008	509009	3881081	dead	unknown
3102	7/23/2008	518762	3871794	dead	canid
3103	4/2/2008	511522	3883201	dead	canid
3104	8/14/2008	510650	3883779	dead	canid
3107	2/12/2008	513352	3877027	dead	unknown
3110	1/15/2008	512696	3877290	dead	canid
3113	1/14/2008	528851	3881464	dead	unknown
3126	8/5/2008	512844	3880166	dead	canid
3128	4/3/2008	508112	3880193	dead	canid
3129	4/29/2008	512955	3878094	dead	canid
3134	2/13/2008	513449	3877348	dead	canid
3142	7/16/2008	520550	3871179	dead	canid
3146	9/3/2008	520013	3877302	dead	canid
3159	3/26/2008	513232	3876995	dead	unknown
3161	5/25/2008	513301	3877180	dead	canid
3168	9/3/2008	518907	3876668	dead	other
3170	11/5/2008	546007	3879590	dead	canid
3175	7/2/2008	517889	3876737	dead	canid
3201	4/2/2008	510789	3883895	dead	canid
3217	9/3/2008	514242	3885157	dead	canid
3222	9/2/2008	518513	3882047	dead	unknown
3225	3/3/2008	509919	3878181	dead	canid
3229	2/11/2008	543895	3882361	dead	canid
3242	4/1/2008	511142	3881352	dead	unknown
3282	9/18/2008	549587	3885382	dead	unknown
3286	9/17/2008	548111	3886568	dead	canid
3298	9/22/2008	536001	3879972	dead	canid
3302	7/26/2008	520119	3872105	dead	canid
3307	2/13/2008	520010	3871304	dead	unknown

3313	1/19/2008	548329	3885664	dead	canid
3366	10/14/2008	518105	3881186	dead	canid
3381	7/14/2008	525589	3886599	dead	necropsy
3408	7/28/2008	525173	3886747	dead	necropsy
3413	4/10/2008	548906	3885306	dead	unknown
3442	10/13/2008	521637	3869424	dead	unknown
3453	10/20/2008	521741	3888349	dead	other
3454	5/5/2008	522932	3887941	dead	necropsy
3460	9/19/2008	521003	3871293	dead	canid
3468	5/12/2008	524237	3889048	dead	necropsy
3469	8/20/2008	524469	3887921	dead	necropsy
3470	10/8/2008	554595	3889216	dead	unknown
3475	8/27/2008	520277	3868485	dead	unknown
3477	6/17/2008	524500	3888696	dead	necropsy
3478	4/23/2008	526805	3887876	dead	unknown
3479	6/30/2008	524266	3889131	dead	necropsy
3481	7/5/2008			dead	unknown
3507	7/26/2008	521119	3871988	dead	canid
3528	10/23/2008	526404	3887357	dead	canid
3581	3/31/2008	549449	3882881	dead	canid
3582	3/31/2008	549962	3883161	dead	canid
3595	1/19/2008			dead	canid
3604	9/8/2008	522921	3888389	dead	necropsy
3605	5/2/2008	522278	3887950	dead	canid
3606	11/2/2008	519329	3869363	dead	unknown
3607	10/19/2008	520467	3869155	dead	canid
3618	7/15/2008	520226	3868981	dead	canid
3628	8/29/2008	522880	3871947	dead	unknown
3700	11/2/2008	520448	3870996	dead	canid
3703	8/9/2008	519850	3870898	dead	canid
3706	3/19/2008	519969	3871651	dead	canid
3708	10/19/2008	523921	3872366	dead	unknown
3709	6/24/2008	521397	3868690	dead	unknown
3711	10/8/2008	521668	3868849	dead	canid
3712	8/20/2008	521804	3868987	dead	unknown
3720	10/15/2008	550214	3885886	dead	canid
4007	7/23/2008	519797	3873062	dead	canid
4011	12/10/2008	518266	3877929	dead	canid
4014	5/25/2008	541130	3889822	dead	canid
4018	5/12/2008	537152	3880227	dead	canid
4025	4/9/2008	528688	3889774	dead	canid

4029	7/2/2008	521239	3871592	dead	canid
4031	10/10/2008	520427	3873600	dead	canid
4032	6/5/2008	531597	3887466	dead	canid
4037	7/16/2008	528706	3888799	dead	canid
4040	6/19/2008	537017	3881004	dead	canid
4043	3/28/2008	533664	3889734	dead	canid
4058	4/15/2008	515016	3875970	dead	canid
4059	6/5/2008	519746	3876746	dead	canid
4093	6/13/2008	508136	3879034	dead	canid
4097	5/27/2008	510621	3880906	dead	canid
4130	5/28/2008	530677	3889921	dead	canid
4137	3/31/2008	509234	3880096	dead	canid
4142	9/27/2008	506923	3882259	dead	canid
4159	7/14/2008	550362	3892571	dead	canid
4161	7/15/2008	530203	3888082	dead	canid
4165	6/3/2008	518676	3876143	dead	canid
4180	4/15/2008	510494	3880734	dead	canid
4182	12/10/2008	519583	3875618	dead	canid
4186	5/20/2008	535934	3879411	dead	natural
4209	5/20/2008	509190	3880315	dead	unknown
4212	10/30/2008	536267	3880303	dead	unknown
4215	4/7/2008	508975	3880147	dead	canid
4218	4/12/2008	547939	3890801	dead	vehicle impact
4226	9/20/2008	520888	3871956	dead	canid
4230	8/16/2008	528465	3890205	dead	canid
4233	5/22/2008	518533	3874750	dead	canid
4237	7/17/2008	508840	3879840	dead	other
4248	11/13/2008	518396	3876448	dead	canid
4250	8/1/2008	548550	3891375	dead	canid
4254	6/23/2008	519995	3876007	dead	canid
4262	5/21/2008	537099	3878074	dead	unknown
4263	8/6/2008	548637	3890703	dead	canid
4266	4/9/2008	548801	3890613	dead	canid
4267	3/29/2008	508339	3879945	dead	unknown
4270	4/11/2008	548787	3890498	dead	canid
4272	5/24/2008	517634	3883004	dead	natural
4274	10/14/2008	509396	3880330	dead	canid
4280	4/1/2008	513404	3885642	dead	canid
4282	7/26/2008	519973	3872084	dead	canid
4283	5/10/2008	535828	3880366	dead	canid
4292	3/27/2008	549014	3890852	dead	unknown

4295	9/19/2008	509619	3879934	dead	canid
4296	4/8/2008	548495	3892319	dead	canid
4304	9/17/2008	519889	3872567	dead	canid
4320	9/11/2008	519391	3877070	dead	canid
4343	11/2/2008	527279	3887605	dead	unknown
4359	6/23/2008	517982	3874434	dead	canid
4360	3/28/2008	528514	3888549	dead	unknown
4388	3/26/2008			dead	canid
4390	2/14/2008			dead	canid
4391	9/21/2008	525104	3889606	dead	canid
4393	2/14/2008	524584	3889905	dead	canid
4399	9/11/2008	517983	3875444	dead	canid
4408	9/27/2008	528120	3888000	dead	canid
4409	9/20/2008	520736	3872096	dead	canid
4413	7/14/2008	520104	3892095	dead	canid
4417	4/28/2008	530673	3889522	dead	necropsy
4443	8/6/2008	509244	3881143	dead	canid
4448	7/5/2008	518481	3876590	dead	canid
4451	4/9/2008	520789	3890523	dead	canid
4458	8/24/2008	520412	3873272	dead	canid
4469	6/6/2008			dead	unknown
4481	5/20/2008	529410	3886487	dead	canid
4484	5/28/2008	548299	3887637	dead	canid
4487	6/2/2008	520306	3873020	dead	canid
4488	11/8/2008	548577	3885422	dead	canid
4489	5/2/2008	508611	3887827	dead	canid
4490	7/20/2008	542422	3889318	dead	raven
4491	5/15/2008	548399	3891260	dead	canid
4498	5/28/2008	550825	3892493	dead	canid
4528	4/30/2008	519532	3871333	dead	raven
4529	4/24/2008			dead	necropsy
4547	5/13/2008	547958	3887037	dead	raven
4586	8/2/2008	519495	3890762	dead	canid
4590	4/16/2008	547764	3890701	dead	necropsy
4593	5/10/2008	519388	3871613	dead	canid
4595	4/21/2008	549347	3890977	dead	canid
4598	7/25/2008	520787	3873341	dead	canid
4614	7/26/2008	521625	3871118	dead	canid
4650	9/17/2008	520301	3871499	dead	raven
4654	7/1/2008	517087	3892875	dead	unknown
4669	6/26/2008	526378	3889882	dead	unknown

4675	6/2/2008	524368	3889592	dead	canid
4684	4/24/2008	520440	3869962	dead	canid
4685	3/30/2008			dead	unknown
4716	9/21/2008	548017	3890871	dead	canid
4720	8/2/2008	520975	3890589	dead	canid
4721	3/25/2008	520811	3890811	dead	canid
4739	5/16/2008	542237	3877227	dead	raven
4756	5/16/2008	542617	3876834	dead	raven
5018	10/22/2008	513007	3897930	dead	unknown
5057	5/21/2008	514446	3898955	dead	unknown
5126	10/28/2008	508606	3898958	dead	canid
3141	11/17/2008	519367	3876075	injured	canid
2540	12/16/08	535854	3880651	injured	unknown
2557	12/08/08	508348	3880980	injured	unknown
4118	12/10/08	519040	3876002	injured	unknown
4291	12/10/08	514822	3878884	injured	unknown
4517	12/11/08	538655	3881274	injured	unknown

- Research – Reports outlining the 2008 activities, results, issues and recommendations for each research project associated with the Fort Irwin desert tortoise translocation effort are attached as appendices (A through E).
- Predator control – Predator control measures were implemented during summer 2008 in an attempt to reduce tortoise predation experienced by translocation research projects. See USDA APHIS (Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service) report, Appendix F.
- Fencing – Western Expansion Area (WEA) continued in 2008 in accordance with the fencing plan. Following discussion with Naval Air Weapons Station (NAWS) China Lake, Fort Irwin agreed to install tortoise fencing along the NAWS China Lake WEA boundary. Following a significant rain event numerous sections of the southern expansion area desert tortoise fence were repaired. A new tortoise fence design was developed to address overland flow issues during rain events. This design will undergo limited testing in 2009.
- On May 21st and 23rd 2008 four pens built to house diseased tortoises were surveyed and cleared. Any residents housed in these pens were removed to ensure they would not be subject to disease. These pens were cleared using United States Fish and Wildlife Service survey protocol. Three individuals were found. All were moved outside of their respective pens into a shady area nearby. Each was given water and a visual health assessment prior to release.
- On July 15th 2008 two biologists from DPW Environmental completed a tortoise survey in the western expansion area prior to the building of a tortoise boundary fence. The survey area was approximately 4.5 miles long and 20 meters wide. One burrow and one

carcass were discovered during this survey. The burrow was marked to ensure it would not be affected by construction. This project was monitored continually and two tortoises were moved out of harm's way during construction.

- In the spring of 2008 18 of the 73 juvenile tortoises (including 4 new tortoises from the WEA) overwintering in Bldg 602 on Fort Irwin were returned to the FISS by Fort Irwin biologists. The remaining 33 surviving tortoises from Bldg 602 were translocated by ITS researchers. With the addition of the 18 juvenile tortoises from Bldg 602 there are a total of 33 juvenile tortoises in the FISS.
- All three FISS structures were searched visually October 6, 2008 for any active individuals above ground. No juveniles were observed but scat littered the edges of pens 2, 3, and 4. This scat was still shiny dating it to this year (USFWS 1992). On October 14th 2008 pen 4 was intensively surveyed. There were no tortoises out walking around in this enclosure. Additionally, all burrows large enough to house a neonate tortoise were examined and no tortoises were found. In the summer of 2008 this pen was searched by a Fort Irwin biologist and no tortoises were observed.
- Pen 1 was surveyed on the 21st of October. No individuals were seen out walking around or in burrows. Pens 2 and 3 were examined October 28, 2008 and no individuals were seen. Pens 2 and 3 were irrigated during the summer months and Fort Irwin biologists reported seeing one or two individuals roaming the pens on multiple occasions. The identity of these individuals was not noted at that time. No burrow was prodded in order to avoid waking hibernating individuals. In spring of 2009 another survey will be conducted in order to confirm the fates of all juveniles at the FISS.

Summary of FISS Surveys:

Date	Survey Area	Juveniles	Scat	Burrows
10/6/08	Walked Pen 1, 2, 3, and 4	No	Yes (pens 1,2,3)	Yes
10/14/08	Pen 4, intensive burrow search	No	No	Yes
10/21/08	Pen 1, intensive burrow search	No	Yes	Yes
10/28/08	Pens 2 and 3, intensive burrow search	No	Yes	Yes

- On December 23rd, 24th, 29th, 30th, and 31st Fort Irwin biologists conducted a desert tortoise construction clearance survey in the western expansion area prior to work beginning on re-routing the existing Copper City Road. No tortoises were found. There were 13 desert tortoise carcasses encountered. Carcass locations were recorded and added to the Fort Irwin tortoise database.
- Lane Mountain Milkvetch - Conservation efforts for the Lane Mountain milkvetch consisted primarily of continued monitoring of populations at several sites. A complete annual report is attached (Appendix G).

B.O. # 1-8-00-F-78

The Biological Opinion for the Proposed Off-Road Vehicle Area, U.S. Army National Training Center, Fort Irwin, California requires an annual report documenting ORV area usage and violations. Established in 2003, the ORV area encompasses approximately 70 acres. The ORV area is completely enclosed by triple strand smooth wire and tortoise proof fencing. During calendar year 2008, the Fort Irwin Recreation Center reported a total of 84 users of the OHV area which is less than in previous years. No desert tortoise encounters were reported within the boundaries of the OHV area. No violations of the NTC and Fort Irwin Regulation 350-3 were reported or observed.

B.O. # 1-8-05-F-43

The Biological Opinion for Translocation of Desert Tortoises from the Southern Expansion Area requires Fort Irwin submit a report to the USFWS within 60 days of completion of activities outlined in the biological opinion. Construction of the I-15 tortoise exclusion fence and holding pens for diseased animals is complete. A final report detailing the effects of this action on desert tortoises is in preparation. Upon provision of this report to USFWS by the Army all provisions set forth by this biological opinion will have been fully satisfied.

B.O. # 1-8-03-F-47

This project is still in progress with a tentative completion date of late February, 2009. Ground disturbance activities for this project were completed in 2007 and early 2008 with no tortoises, burrows or carcasses observed. A full report will be submitted, as required, within 90 days of project completion.

Literature Cited

Annual United States Fish and Wildlife Service report on the status of the desert tortoise at Fort Irwin.
2007. Signed by Lance Toyofuku.

USFWS. 1992. *Field Survey Protocol for any Federal and Non-federal Action That May Occur Within the Range of the Desert Tortoise.*

2009 Annual Reports for Fort Irwin Biological Opinions and Desert Tortoise Permit for the Fort Irwin Translocation Project



Contents

Biological Opinion 1-8-95-F-16R

Re-initiation of Formal Consultation on the Army's Current Mission at the National Training Center, Fort Irwin, California, dtd 15 September 1995

Biological Opinion 1-8-00-F-78

Proposed Off-Road Vehicle Area, U.S. Army National Training Center, Fort Irwin, San Bernardino County, California, dtd 31 May 2002

Biological Opinion 1-8-03-F-48

Biological Opinion for the Proposed Addition of Maneuver Training Lands at Fort Irwin, California, dtd 15 March 2004

Federal Fish and Wildlife Permit #TE102235-4

Threatened Species, Desert Tortoise dtd 1 July 2009

List of Tables

1. Desert tortoise encounters by DPW staff on the NTC & Fort Irwin in 2009.
2. Last known status and mortalities of tortoises in the FISS as of December 31, 2009
3. Summary information of desert tortoises involved in the Fort Irwin Translocation Project
4. Summary of the volume of unused desert tortoise blood samples

Literature Cited

Appendices

1. Progress Report: Health Status of Desert Tortoises (*Gopherus agassizii*) Remaining within Ft. Irwin's Southern Expansion Area in 2009: Recommendations for Disposition. (USGS Moreno Valley, CA)
2. Progress Report: The Health Status of Desert Tortoises (*Gopherus agassizii*) in the Western Expansion Area, San Bernardino County, California: 2008 and 2009 (USGS Moreno Valley, CA)
3. Progress Report: The Health Status of Translocated Desert Tortoises (*Gopherus agassizii*) in the Fort Irwin Translocation Area and Surrounding Release Plots, San Bernardino County, California: Year 2 (USGS Moreno Valley, CA)
4. Progress Report: An Evaluation of Desert Tortoises (*Gopherus agassizii*) and Their Habitats at 47 Sample Plots in the Western Expansion Translocation Area, Fort Irwin Translocation Project, San Bernardino County, California (USGS Moreno Valley, CA)
5. US Fish and Wildlife Service Annual Report: Desert Tortoise Homing Behavior; Research Activities in support of the Fort Irwin National Training Center Expansion Project

6. Research Summary (QinetiQ): Comparing Translocation Methods and Effectiveness for Desert Tortoises at Fort Irwin.
7. An Annual Report for the Fort Irwin Desert Tortoise Translocation Project: 2009 Progress (USGS Henderson, NV)
8. Annual Report: Yearly Monitoring of Lane Mountain Milkvetch (*Astragalus jaegerianus*) on Fort Irwin, CA for 2009

Annual Reports for Fort Irwin Biological Opinions and Desert Tortoise Permit for the Fort Irwin Translocation Project

Biological Opinion # 1-8-95-F-16R

Re-initiation of Forma Consultation on the Army's Current Mission at the National Training Center, Fort Irwin, California

ABSTRACT

Each Federal agency shall insure that any action authorized, funded, or carried out by such agency is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of any endangered species or threatened species or result in the destruction or adverse modification of habitat of such species which is determined by the Secretary, after consultation, to be critical, unless such agency has been granted an exemption. In fulfilling the requirements of this paragraph each agency shall use the best scientific and commercial data available. Pursuant to submission of a biological assessment identifying the potential effects of military training activities on threatened, endangered and sensitive species, within the original boundaries of Fort Irwin and the National Training Center, the US Fish and Wildlife Service rendered a biological opinion. The Service stated in its opinion that the effects of military training activities described were not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of the desert tortoise or adversely modify critical habitat. The opinion further requires Fort Irwin submit an annual report summarizing:

1. the number of desert tortoises moved by authorized biologists
2. the number of desert tortoises killed or injured providing the specific information for each tortoise described in term and condition 12 of the opinion
3. any new ITAM program data
4. recommendations for modifying the terms and conditions to enhance desert tortoise protection
5. acreage disturbed, if any, below the UTM 90 line

INTRODUCTION

The National Training Center (NTC) at Fort Irwin is a Combat Training Center for the Army, which trains 10 armored brigades each year in exercises called rotations. Rotations last for 28-35 days and involve approximately 9,000 soldiers and Department of the Army civilians. The training at Fort Irwin is designed to provide soldiers the experience needed to excel at their missions. Today's Army can drive faster, operate in wider ranges, and shoot farther necessitating the use of every available acre on the installation for training.

RESULTS

Per the Biological Opinion for the Army's Current Mission at the National Training Center, Fort Irwin, California, Table 1 provides a listing of all desert tortoise encounters within the original

Fort Irwin boundary reported to Fort Irwin personnel during calendar year 2009. There were a total of thirty (30) desert tortoise encounters, not including carcass sightings, within the original boundary of Fort Irwin. Fourteen (14) sightings involved observations where the animal was not in harm's way and no actions were taken to relocate the animal; one (1) encounter involved re-directing traffic around a tortoise crossing a road; six (6) incidents occurred where the tortoise was moved approximately 100- 150m out of harm's way; one (1) incident involved the mortality of a desert tortoise caused by vehicle impact; and eight (8) incidents involved relocations by authorized biologists where the tortoise was moved greater than 150 meters from its original location. All tortoises listed as "relocated" were in good general health and none voided as a result of handling or relocation. Handling and relocation procedures were conducted as directed by the Desert Tortoise Council (1994).

Table 1. Desert tortoise encounters by DPW staff on the NTC & Fort Irwin in 2009.

UTM coordinates reported in Zone 11, NAD 83

Date	Easting	Northing	Age/Sex	Activity / Status/ Comments
13 March	512411	3887149	Adult/ male	Observation – no action taken.
4 April	521995	3904380	Adult / unknown	Mortality – tortoise hit by car on Goldstone Road.
22 April	527136	3902134	Adult/ male	Recovered from cantonment. Relocated to 520905E, 3902780N
24 April	506512	3893115	Adult/ female	Moved 100 meters off roadway.
27 April	523500	3896500	Adult/ unknown	Moved 100 meters off roadway.
28 April	519031	3989950	Adult/ female	Observation – no action taken.
28 April	551050	3908500	Adult/ male	Moved 100 meters off dirt road.
02 May	512712	3915365	Adult/ male	Moved tortoise from military training maneuver to: 511689E, 3915472N.
07 May	558100	3904500	Adult/ unknown	Observation – no action taken.
08 May	528318	3891446	Adult/ unknown	Observation – no action taken.
08 May	511594	3890276	Adult/ male	Courtship observation – no action taken.
08 May	511594	3890276	Adult / female	Courtship observation – no action taken.
08 May	540300	3912300	Adult/ unknown	Observation – no action taken.
12 May	530500	3905500	Adult/ unknown	Removed from construction area – relocated to: 530300E, 3905300N
12 May	527037	3892732	Juvenile	Observation – no action taken.
12 May	526850	3891680	Juvenile	Observation – no action taken.
13 May	523500	3896500	Adult/ male	Moved 150 meters off roadway.
13 May	523200	3896400	Adult / unknown	Moved tortoise approx. 100 meters off Ft Irwin road.

21 May	511146	3890282	Adult/ male	Observation – no action taken.
31 May	529971	3915333	Adult / female	Animal was in a burrow in the roadbank of a busy MSR. Relocated to safe area near existing burrow at UTM: 519552E, 3899706N and released – boarded up roadway burrow after checking for eggs.
31 May	529971	3915333	Adult / male	Observation – no action taken: male was near female listed above.
29 May	525362	3892902	Juvenile	Recovered tortoise from military training maneuver and relocated near milkvetch cons. area at: 521754E, 3995375N.
01 June	514072	3894343	Adult/ unknown	Observed in burrow – no action taken.
01 June	511087	3893558	Adult / unknown	Moved 100 meters off dirt roadway.
02 June	529973	3915332	Adult / male	Recovered from military training maneuver. Relocated to: 519552E, 3899706N
04 June	551677	3929743	Adult/ male	Recovered from military training maneuver. Relocated to: 550288E, 3929334N
23 June	530928	3905448	Adult/ unknown	Observed in burrow – no action taken.
15 July	566855	3909688	Adult / unknown	Observed in burrow during routine survey – no action taken.
2 October	521213	3904314	Adult / male	Recovered from military training maneuver and relocated to 519633E, 3899549N.
19 October	522245	3903084	Adult /female	Observation – no action taken.

Listed below is a consecutive summary of all 2009 construction-related tortoise survey and monitoring efforts conducted within the original boundaries of Fort Irwin.

Summary of 2009 Survey and Monitoring Efforts within the original boundaries of Fort Irwin

- On March 17 and 18, 2009, an area was surveyed for a proposed road berm and the construction of several buildings on live fire range #16. A follow up survey was completed on September 24, 2009. No desert tortoises, species of special concern, or their sign were encountered during the survey. This area is heavily utilized for training and live fire and the habitat represents minimal suitability for desert tortoises.
- On May 12, 2009, an ITAM (Integrated Training Area Management) employee and a biologist surveyed three sites for proposed vegetation restoration projects within heavily used training areas of Ft. Irwin. No desert tortoises, sensitive species, or their sign were observed. Re-vegetation efforts should have a positive impact on wildlife use of these highly degraded areas.

- On May 20, 2009, biologists surveyed an area for a utility trench for the fiber optic network (FON) project. The area of the proposed trench was moderately disturbed and contained sparse vegetation. No desert tortoises, sensitive species, or their sign was observed in the planned utility pathway or while monitoring during trench digging and backfilling activities.
- On June 12, 2009, biologists surveyed an area near Medina Wasl, a training city within the Ft. Irwin training range. A 10 ft. x 10 ft. well is to be constructed, with a 50 ft. x 50 ft. impact area. This area, plus an additional 20 ft. buffer, was surveyed. The area has been highly disturbed due to military training activity. No desert tortoises, sensitive species, or their sign were observed during the survey. Tortoise monitors were deployed to conduct spot-checks during construction activity.
- On June 12, 2009, monitors surveyed final construction of the fiber optic network (FON) spur in the western expansion area. A 4,200 feet long trench 1.5 feet wide was dug and backfilled for a fiber optic cable. A monitor was on site daily during construction activity to check the trench and walk the area in front of groundbreaking activity. No desert tortoises, sensitive species, or their sign were observed in this route of construction.
- On June 9 and 10, 2009 biologists surveyed an area of a proposed main supply route (MSR) within the eastern expansion area of Ft. Irwin. The construction project consisted of additions to pre-existing roads. No tortoises or sensitive species were seen. Several burrows were found and GPS points were taken. Burrows did not appear active or in recent use by tortoises. Monitors were deployed during groundbreaking activity as needed.
- On June 16, 18, 22, 34, and July 1, 2009, biologists surveyed three firing ranges (17, 18, 18a) being updated for battle simulation training. This update included the construction of several new support structures such as latrines, towers, and a mess hall. One possible tortoise burrow was observed and marked with flagging and the location recorded with a handheld GPS unit. Another surveyed range contained a live tortoise in a burrow (details of observation in Table 1). No other observations of desert tortoises, sensitive species, or their sign were made. Construction on this project has been delayed and is not re-scheduled to resume until approximately June, 2010. When construction plans resume, clearance surveys will be repeated. If the previously-identified tortoise is observed a decision will be made whether to monitor or relocate this animal prior to ground disturbance.
- On June 24 and 25, 2009 biologists surveyed four sites that were proposed practice dig training sites. All four sites involved less than one square acre, combined. No desert tortoises or their sign were observed. No monitors were deployed during groundbreaking as this activity constituted a military training operation. All military personnel are briefed on use of areas containing sensitive species, endangered species and other wildlife and actions to take if a tortoise is encountered.

- On July 15, 2009, biologists surveyed three proposed borrow pit sites and one existing pit in the eastern expansion area (EEA). These pits were identified to serve as potential sources of fill to facilitate construction of a main supply route (MSR). One desert tortoise and one active burrow were noted within one of the proposed sites. To avoid disturbance of this tortoise, an alternate area was identified and surveyed on July 16. No other desert tortoises, sensitive species, or their sign were observed.
- On July 24, 2009, a biologist surveyed the perimeter of the Ammo Supply Point (ASP) for installation of solar perimeter lighting. The ASP is a fenced-in series of supply buildings surrounded by relatively undisturbed habitat. No desert tortoises, sensitive species, or their sign were sighted in the proposed construction area.
- On August 7, 2009, biologists surveyed land on either side of Fort Irwin Road immediately adjacent to the front security gate. Road upgrades are planned that will disturb both vegetated shoulders of the existing roadway. No tortoises, sensitive species, or their sign were observed. Biologists continued spot checking the project until its completion.
- On August 20 and 21, 2009, biologists surveyed Range 17 for scheduled improvements including road upgrades and target installations. One tortoise carcass, a juvenile consisting of mostly shell fragments, was seen in the vicinity of the proposed construction. No live desert tortoises, sensitive species, or other tortoise sign were sighted during the survey. Two tortoise sightings were previously documented within 1 km of the proposed upgrades. Therefore, monitors will be present as needed during ground-breaking activities associated with construction.
- On August 24, 2009, biologists surveyed a plot adjacent to forward operating base (FOB) Ackbar on Ft. Irwin. An existing berm is scheduled to be extended into the survey area. This survey area is highly disturbed and denuded due to heavy military training. No desert tortoises, sensitive species, or their sign were observed.
- September 10, 2009 through January 6, 2010 DPW biologists performed pre-construction surveys; daily monitoring; and/or spot checking as appropriate on four tortoise fencing projects in the Western Expansion Area and front security gate / tank gap area of Ft Irwin Road. The total length of fencing installed was approximately 25 km. Total area of ground disturbance associated with these projects was approximately 43 hectares. Tortoise sign encountered during the course of these projects included several unoccupied but good-condition tortoise burrows and one older (>1 yr) carcass. The burrows and carcass were encountered within approx. 20 meters of the project boundary. No live tortoises or other sign were encountered during the course of the four projects.
- From September 10, 2009 through January 6, 2010 biologists conducted a pre-construction clearance survey and construction monitoring during all phases of groundbreaking associated with a 200m x 200m tortoise disease enclosure in the WEA. A 30m x 900 m access road and an 80m x 50m equipment staging area were also cleared for the project. Several potential burrows and two live tortoises were encountered during

the preconstruction clearance survey. One of the tortoises, a hatchling, was transferred to USGS (United States Geological Survey) tortoise research personnel. The other tortoise, an adult male, was a previously-identified, transmittered animal (ID# 5256). This tortoise was relocated by an authorized biologist to an area approximately 300 meters north of the project area near an existing burrow. This animal and several other transmittered tortoises in the vicinity were distance-monitored via radio telemetry to ensure that they remained clear of the project area (these animals were not approached – DPW biologists simply ensured monitored animals did not move into project activity) .

- On September 17, 2009 a report was compiled detailing the survey of a truck bypass road parallel to Fort Irwin Road. This bypass route is a 2 lane road approximately 3.5 miles long leading to the front security gate of Ft. Irwin. No desert tortoises, sensitive species, or their sign were encountered in a preconstruction survey of the area. Monitors walked the linear project daily and conducted checks beneath parked equipment during groundbreaking activities. Subsequent spot checks were conducted to monitor ongoing construction. No tortoises or sign were observed during these surveys.
- On October 27, 29, and November 2, 2009 biologists conducted a clearance survey of an existing road berm along the northern boundary of the western expansion area (WEA). This area is proposed as the site of a boundary fence approximately 19 km in length. Two potential and one confirmed burrow containing scat were observed during the survey. The burrows were deteriorated and were not occupied. The scat observed was not recent. No live desert tortoises were encountered, however; one carcass was documented just outside of the project area. Biologists were deployed daily to monitor the ongoing construction.
- On November 20, 2009, biologists surveyed an open lot within garrison before construction of a proposed barracks complex. This site is a small, degraded lot within the developed compound of Ft. Irwin and composed approximately 2 acres. No desert tortoises, sensitive species, or their sign were encountered during the survey. When construction begins, monitors will be deployed as necessary to monitor groundbreaking activity.
- On December 8, 2009, biologists surveyed the proposed route of a road upgrade at Medina Wasl village training site. The survey area is a linear 500 m x 1 km highly degraded area. No desert tortoises, sensitive species, or their sign were encountered during the survey. Monitors will be deployed to the construction zone as needed when groundbreaking activities ensue.
- On December 10, 2009, biologists surveyed an open lot within the Ft Irwin garrison. This lot will house a facility for hand-to-hand combat training. The surveyed area encompassed approximately 1 acre of degraded, heavily impacted habitat. No desert tortoises, sensitive species, or their sign were encountered during the survey. Monitors will be on site during construction phases expected to commence in 2010.

- On December 15, 2009, biologists surveyed a proposed fence route adjacent and parallel to Fort Irwin Road. This project will fill in an existing gap in tortoise fencing and is intended to prevent desert tortoises from entering the adjacent road. No desert tortoises, sensitive species, or their sign were encountered during the survey. Monitors were deployed during groundbreaking activity and conducted spot-checks until the project was completed.
- On December 18, 2009, biologists surveyed two small areas adjacent to FOB (forward operating base) Denver proposed for minor construction projects. The surveyed area is a heavily impacted training area containing highly degraded habitat. No desert tortoises, sensitive species, or their sign were encountered during the survey. Monitors will be on site as needed during construction phases.

No disturbance of lands occurred below the UTM 90 line as a result of training activities during this reporting period.

Biological Opinion # 1-8-00-F-78

Proposed Off-Road Vehicle Area, U.S. Army National Training Center, Fort Irwin, San Bernardino County, California

ABSTRACT

Each Federal agency shall insure that any action authorized, funded, or carried out by such agency is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of any endangered species or threatened species or result in the destruction or adverse modification of habitat of such species which is determined by the Secretary, after consultation, to be critical, unless such agency has been granted an exemption. In fulfilling the requirements of this paragraph each agency shall use the best scientific and commercial data available. Pursuant to a review of the current status of the desert tortoise, the environmental baseline for the action area, the effects of the proposed Outdoor Recreation Vehicle (ORV) Area and the cumulative effects, the US Fish and Wildlife Service rendered a biological opinion. The Service stated in its opinion that the ORV Area, as proposed, is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of the desert tortoise. The opinion further requires Fort Irwin submit an annual report summarizing compliance with NTC and Fort Irwin Regulation 350-3 detailing the amount of use occurring at the ORV Area, the types and occurrences of violations, such as breaches of the perimeter fence, and corrective measures taken to prevent further violations

INTRODUCTION

Fort Irwin established an ORV Area for military personnel and their dependents to use in their leisure time. There was no authorized area for this type of activity on Fort Irwin. As a result, some soldiers and/or their dependents used various areas of the installation for ORV activity. The Army does not condone this activity as it presents a safety hazard due to the lack of procedures to follow should an ORV rider not return at a designated time. The requirements for authorization of an ORV area are to have it located close to the base cantonment area, that it provide access to an emergency phone and that it have controlled access. The availability of a

single, officially sanctioned location for ORV use will ensure that other areas of the installation are not further damaged by this type of activity, thereby protecting the desert tortoise and other sensitive species. The established ORV Area is the only authorized area on post upon which this activity is allowed. Established in 2003, the ORV area encompasses approximately 70 acres. It is completely enclosed by triple strand smooth wire and tortoise proof fencing.

RESULTS

The Fort Irwin Recreation Center reported a total of eighty-two (82) users of the OHV area representing 36 calendar days of use during calendar year 2009. No desert tortoise encounters were reported within the boundaries of the OHV area. Following a mid-December rain event, the OHV perimeter tortoise fence was inspected by an authorized DPW biologist. Three areas of fence damage were documented during this inspection. One area of the fence line was undermined/washed out as a result of heavy surface water flow with damage in the other two areas consisting of sections of fence being broken away as a result of heavy sediment flow. These three locations were immediately repaired and a moderate-intensity survey for desert tortoise conducted to clear the area of tortoises that may have gained access to the ORV area through the fence breaks. No violations of the NTC and Fort Irwin Regulation 350-3 were reported or observed.

Biological Opinion # 1-8-03-F-48 and USFWS Permit # TE102235-4

Proposed Addition of Maneuver Training Lands at Fort Irwin, California

ABSTRACT

Each Federal agency shall insure that any action authorized, funded, or carried out by such agency is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of any endangered species or threatened species or result in the destruction or adverse modification of habitat of such species which is determined by the Secretary, after consultation, to be critical, unless such agency has been granted an exemption. In fulfilling the requirements of this paragraph each agency shall use the best scientific and commercial data available. Pursuant to submission of a biological assessment identifying the potential effects of military training activities on threatened, endangered and sensitive species, within the expansion areas, the US Fish and Wildlife Service rendered a biological opinion. The Service stated in its opinion that the effects of the addition of training lands at Fort Irwin is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of the desert tortoise and Lane Mountain milk-vetch or to destroy or adversely modify critical habitat of the desert tortoise. The opinion further requires Fort Irwin submit an annual report summarizing:

1. details on each desert tortoise that is found dead or injured within the new training areas at Fort Irwin or at translocation sites
2. the location of each mortality, circumstances of the incident and any actions undertaken to prevent similar instances from occurring in the future
3. describe activities that the Army implemented or funded as part of its conservation program for the desert tortoise and Lane Mountain milk-vetch (activities related to translocation, the amount of road rehabilitation funded, land acquired, roads fenced, etc.) within habitat of the desert tortoise and Lane Mountain milk-vetch

4. describe actions taken during the year to prepare the new training lands for military exercise if the activities occurred in habitat of the desert tortoise and Lane Mountain milk-vetch
5. provide an evaluation of the protective measures implemented

INTRODUCTION

The National Training Center (NTC) and Fort Irwin Military Reservation in San Bernardino County, California, is used to train United States Army brigade-sized units in a realistic battlefield environment. Because of changes in training requirements caused by new equipment, technology and Army fighting doctrine, the facility was expanded by a congressional land withdrawal action in 2001 by approximately 110,000 acres (44,517 ha). Further refinements due to land surveys and GIS analysis of the boundary indicate the total land withdrawal area to be approximately 118,674 acres (48,027 ha). On January 11, 2002, President Bush signed the Fort Irwin Military Lands Withdrawal Act of 2001 into law withdrawing the requested lands for military training purposes. Since that time Fort Irwin has developed and implemented a desert tortoise translocation plan, set aside lands for desert tortoise and Lane Mountain milk-vetch conservation and implemented a number of long term studies addressing multiple aspects of desert tortoise and Lane Mountain milk-vetch demography. The eastern expansion area (EEA) was opened to training in 2008. The western and southern expansion areas (WEA and SEA, respectively) are not currently available for military training (pending completion of all mitigation requirements) and are being managed in a manner consistent with Bureau of Land Management desert wildlife management area protocols.

RESULTS

Summary information of desert tortoise mortalities for tortoises covered under this biological opinion and US Fish and Wildlife Permit # TE102235-4 is attached as Table 3. One-hundred-twenty-six (126) mortalities and fifty-two (52) injured tortoises were documented during 2009.

On May 26, 2009, following a significant wind event, DPW biologists visited the Fort Irwin Study Site juvenile tortoise holding pens to conduct spring surveys for emerging juvenile tortoises and discovered the carcasses of twelve (12) tortoises depredated by one or more ravens that gained access to pens 2 and 3 (Table 2). Three holes in the fencing were discovered and immediately repaired with scrap wire. On May 27 and 28, 2009 biologists returned to the FISS pens with materials to repair all holes and tears in the fencing that could be located. At that time, an additional juvenile carcass, overlooked during the previous visit, was discovered in pen #3.

Beginning on June 16, 2009, a biologist visited the FISS pens bi-weekly to check for tortoises and assess need for continued repairs to the worn fences in pens 2 and 3. Shallow water pans were also filled during each visit in pens 1, 2 and 3. Pen 4 was broken down and relocated to a new site in the Western Expansion Area. Based on their worn condition, Pens 2 and 3 were thoroughly searched and all tortoises found moved to Pen 1. Pens 2 and 3 will no longer be used to house tortoises and will ultimately be torn down and materials disposed of.

Currently, of the fifty six (56) juvenile tortoises put in the FISS pens, there have been twenty three (23) confirmed mortalities with eighteen (18) confirmed by tortoise ID number and 5 confirmed with tortoise ID number unknown. Six (6) tortoises in the FISS pens are confirmed

alive. Thirty two (32) tortoises in the FISS pens have a status of unknown but are presumed alive (Table 2).

Table 2. Last known status* and mortalities of tortoises in the FISS as of December 31, 2009

Tortoise ID#	Most Recent Entry Date	Previous Entry Date	FISS Plot #	Status
4017		26-Mar-07		Dead/unknown
4175		10-Apr-07		Status / location unknown
4187		15-Apr-08		Status / location unknown
4189		15-Apr-07		Status / location unknown
4345		22-Apr-07		Dead/unknown
4348		22-Apr-07		Dead/unknown
4350		22-Apr-07		Dead/unknown
4351		28-Apr-07		Dead/unknown
4355		20-Apr-07		Dead/unknown
4356		20-Apr-07		Dead/unknown
4357		2-May-07		Status / location unknown
4401		14-Apr-07		Dead/unknown
4412		15-Apr-08		Status / location unknown
4414		2-May-07		Status / location unknown
4439		12-May-07		Status / location unknown
4501	26-May-09	1-May-08	3	Mortality due to attack from raven inside enclosure.
4502		1-May-08	3	Unknown
4503		28-Sep-07		Status / location unknown
4509		30-May-07		Status / location unknown
4522	27-Mar-09	11-May-07	1	Foraging – good condition.
4523		11-May-07		Status / location unknown
4551		27-May-07		Status / location unknown
4562		27-May-07		Status / location unknown
4563	16-Jun-09	24-May-07	1	Foraging – good condition
4612		16-Apr-08		Status / location unknown
4618		18-Oct-07		Status / location unknown
4620		12-Oct-08		Status / location unknown
4631		18-Oct-07		Status / location unknown
4636	26-May-09	1-May-08	3	Mortality due to attack from raven inside enclosure.
4647		29-Sep-07		Status / location unknown
4648		29-Sep-07		Status / location unknown
4660		1-May-08	3	Unknown
4661	16-Jun-09	29-Sep-07		Foraging and drinking – good condition
4696		1-May-08	3	Unknown
4697		8-Oct-07		Dead/unknown; died at lab
4708		21-Dec-07		necropsy
4709		8-Oct-07		Split jaw; taken to vet; died
4718	Nov-09	7-Oct-07	1	Relocated to pen #1 from Pen #3
4725		1-May-08	3	Unknown
4733		12-Apr-08		Status / location unknown

4740	26-May-09	1-May-08	3	Mortality due to attack from raven inside enclosure.
4742		1-May-08	3	Unknown
4743	26-May-09	1-May-08	3	Mortality due to attack from raven inside enclosure.
4744		1-May-08	3	Unknown
4745	26-May-09	1-May-08	3	Mortality due to attack from raven inside enclosure.
4750		1-May-08	3	Unknown
4751		1-May-08	3	Unknown
4752	26-May-09	1-May-08	3	Mortality due to attack from raven inside enclosure.
4755		18-Oct-07		Status / location unknown
4757		16-Oct-07		Status / location unknown
5005	26-May-09	22-May-08	2	Mortality due to attack from raven inside enclosure.
5029		22-May-08	2	Unknown
5129	Nov-09	22-May-08	1	Relocated to pen #1 from Pen #2
5131	Nov-09	22-May-08	2	Relocated to pen #1 from pen #2
5480		14-Oct-09		Status / location unknown
5500		22-Oct-09		Status / location unknown

*Five (5) juvenile carcasses recovered during the raven predation incident were unmarked and/or scutes were missing. Therefore, up to five of the animals marked as status "Unknown" may be dead.

Western Expansion Area (WEA) fencing projects continued in 2009 in accordance with the approved Fencing Plan and July, 2006 Addendum (Calibre 2005). As of the end of December 2009, all fencing projects identified in the Plan have been completed.

In October, 2009, construction began on the 40,000 m² desert tortoise disease enclosure in the Western Expansion Area (Western Expansion Disease Enclosure, WEDE). The 225 m² round portable FISS enclosure (previously identified as FISS #4) was also relocated from the SEA to the WEA. Both of these facilities are undergoing final preparations for the expected receipt of adult tortoises (to the WEDE) and juveniles (FISS) in spring 2010.

Fort Irwin continues to resource the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Barstow Field Office, to implement road closure activities in the West Mojave Land Management Planning Area. Additionally, Fort Irwin provides funding to resource two BLM law enforcement rangers to increase patrolling efforts to eliminate unauthorized activities in the southern expansion translocation area and western expansion translocation area protecting desert tortoise and Lane Mountain milk-vetch habitat.

Fort Irwin continued Lane Mountain milk-vetch survey efforts both in conservation areas on Fort Irwin and in the Coolgardie Mesa area on BLM lands. A report summarizing these activities is attached.

Reports outlining 2009 research activities, results, issues and recommendations for each research project associated with the Fort Irwin desert tortoise translocation effort are attached as appendices. 2009 reports include:

1. The Health Status of Translocated Desert Tortoises (*Gopherus agassizii*) in the Fort Irwin Translocation Area and Surrounding Release Plots, San Bernardino County, California: Year 2
2. The Health Status of Desert Tortoises (*Gopherus agassizii*) in the Western Expansion Area, San Bernardino County, California: 2008 and 2009
3. An Evaluation of Desert Tortoises (*Gopherus agassizii*) and Their Habitats at 47 Sample Plots in the Western Expansion Translocation Area, Fort Irwin Translocation Project, San Bernardino County, California
4. Health Status of Desert Tortoises (*Gopherus agassizii*) Remaining within Ft. Irwin's Southern Expansion Area in 2009: Recommendations for Disposition
5. An Annual Report for the Fort Irwin Desert Tortoise Translocation Project, Evaluation of Physiological Stress on Translocated Desert Tortoise
6. Desert Tortoise Homing Behavior Research Activities in Support of the Fort Irwin National Training Center Expansion Project
7. Comparing Translocation Methods and Effectiveness for Desert Tortoises at Fort Irwin, a Comprehensive Study: 2009 Report

Table with columns: ID, Name, Date, Location, Status, and Notes. Contains detailed timeline entries for various individuals and events, including dates like 15-Jun-05, 17-Jul-05, and 18-Sep-05, and locations like STA, ITB, and various research sites.

Locations only

ID	Name	DOB	Sex	Religion	Medical History	Current Status	Notes	Next Visit
345	M 267	1972-05-11	M	ITB, Research	Resistant	SD	14-May-08	14-May-08
346	M 268	1972-05-11	M	ITB, Research	Resistant	SD	14-May-08	14-May-08
347	M 269	1972-05-11	M	ITB, Research	Resistant	SD	14-May-08	14-May-08
348	M 270	1972-05-11	M	ITB, Research	Resistant	SD	14-May-08	14-May-08
349	M 271	1972-05-11	M	ITB, Research	Resistant	SD	14-May-08	14-May-08
350	M 272	1972-05-11	M	ITB, Research	Resistant	SD	14-May-08	14-May-08
351	M 273	1972-05-11	M	ITB, Research	Resistant	SD	14-May-08	14-May-08
352	M 274	1972-05-11	M	ITB, Research	Resistant	SD	14-May-08	14-May-08
353	M 275	1972-05-11	M	ITB, Research	Resistant	SD	14-May-08	14-May-08
354	M 276	1972-05-11	M	ITB, Research	Resistant	SD	14-May-08	14-May-08
355	M 277	1972-05-11	M	ITB, Research	Resistant	SD	14-May-08	14-May-08
356	M 278	1972-05-11	M	ITB, Research	Resistant	SD	14-May-08	14-May-08
357	M 279	1972-05-11	M	ITB, Research	Resistant	SD	14-May-08	14-May-08
358	M 280	1972-05-11	M	ITB, Research	Resistant	SD	14-May-08	14-May-08
359	M 281	1972-05-11	M	ITB, Research	Resistant	SD	14-May-08	14-May-08
360	M 282	1972-05-11	M	ITB, Research	Resistant	SD	14-May-08	14-May-08
361	M 283	1972-05-11	M	ITB, Research	Resistant	SD	14-May-08	14-May-08
362	M 284	1972-05-11	M	ITB, Research	Resistant	SD	14-May-08	14-May-08
363	M 285	1972-05-11	M	ITB, Research	Resistant	SD	14-May-08	14-May-08
364	M 286	1972-05-11	M	ITB, Research	Resistant	SD	14-May-08	14-May-08
365	M 287	1972-05-11	M	ITB, Research	Resistant	SD	14-May-08	14-May-08
366	M 288	1972-05-11	M	ITB, Research	Resistant	SD	14-May-08	14-May-08
367	M 289	1972-05-11	M	ITB, Research	Resistant	SD	14-May-08	14-May-08
368	M 290	1972-05-11	M	ITB, Research	Resistant	SD	14-May-08	14-May-08
369	M 291	1972-05-11	M	ITB, Research	Resistant	SD	14-May-08	14-May-08
370	M 292	1972-05-11	M	ITB, Research	Resistant	SD	14-May-08	14-May-08
371	M 293	1972-05-11	M	ITB, Research	Resistant	SD	14-May-08	14-May-08
372	M 294	1972-05-11	M	ITB, Research	Resistant	SD	14-May-08	14-May-08
373	M 295	1972-05-11	M	ITB, Research	Resistant	SD	14-May-08	14-May-08
374	M 296	1972-05-11	M	ITB, Research	Resistant	SD	14-May-08	14-May-08
375	M 297	1972-05-11	M	ITB, Research	Resistant	SD	14-May-08	14-May-08
376	M 298	1972-05-11	M	ITB, Research	Resistant	SD	14-May-08	14-May-08
377	M 299	1972-05-11	M	ITB, Research	Resistant	SD	14-May-08	14-May-08
378	M 300	1972-05-11	M	ITB, Research	Resistant	SD	14-May-08	14-May-08
379	M 301	1972-05-11	M	ITB, Research	Resistant	SD	14-May-08	14-May-08
380	M 302	1972-05-11	M	ITB, Research	Resistant	SD	14-May-08	14-May-08
381	M 303	1972-05-11	M	ITB, Research	Resistant	SD	14-May-08	14-May-08
382	M 304	1972-05-11	M	ITB, Research	Resistant	SD	14-May-08	14-May-08
383	M 305	1972-05-11	M	ITB, Research	Resistant	SD	14-May-08	14-May-08
384	M 306	1972-05-11	M	ITB, Research	Resistant	SD	14-May-08	14-May-08
385	M 307	1972-05-11	M	ITB, Research	Resistant	SD	14-May-08	14-May-08

Table with columns: ID, Name, Date, Status, Location, and Notes. Contains detailed records for various individuals, including dates and specific locations like 'USO Health' or 'USO Research'.

Table with columns: Name, Date, Status, Location, and Notes. Lists individuals with their respective dates and locations, such as 'Tonsils found grade down with signs of heat stress'.

Case No.	Offense	Date	Location	Offender	Offense Description	Disposition	Case Status	Notes
4899	M	15-Jun-07	15-Jun-07	15-Jun-07	15-Jun-07	15-Jun-07	15-Jun-07	15-Jun-07

References and Literature Cited

Calibre. 2005. Fencing Plan: National Training Center, Fort Irwin, California, and July, 2006 Addendum.

Desert Tortoise Council. 1994 (Revised 1999). *Guidelines for Handling Desert Tortoises During Construction Projects*. Edward L. LaRue, Jr., editor. Wrightwood, California.

USFWS. 1992. *Field Survey Protocol for any Federal and Non-federal Action That May Occur Within the Range of the Desert Tortoise (Gopherus agassizii)*. 16 pp.

PROGRESS REPORT FOR 2009

Health Status of Desert Tortoises (*Gopherus agassizii*) Remaining
within Ft. Irwin's Southern Expansion Area in 2009:
Recommendations for Disposition

Kristin H. Berry and Tim Gowan
U. S. Geological Survey
Western Ecological Research Center
22835 Calle San Juan de Los Lagos
Moreno Valley, California 92553

for

Commander National Training Center and Fort Irwin
ATTN: AFZJ-PW-EV, Mr. Clarence Everly
P.O. Box 105097
Fort Irwin, CA 92310-5097

Abstract. During spring of 2009, 19 desert tortoises remaining within the confines of Ft. Irwin's boundaries in the Southern Expansion Area (SEA) were evaluated for health with blood and nasal lavage samples. One tortoise was ELISA positive and 18 others were ELISA negative for *M. agassizii*. All 19 tortoises were ELISA negative for *M. testudineum*. During fall, 8 tortoises were re-evaluated for health. One tortoise had a suspect ELISA test for *M. agassizii*, and 7 others were ELISA negative (Table 3). All 8 tortoises were ELISA negative for *M. testudineum*. Two tortoises were found dead and five tortoises could not be found by the end of 2009. Recommendations are offered for the disposition of 39 tortoises potentially remaining within the confines of Ft. Irwin's boundaries in the SEA. The 39 tortoises include live individuals with known locations and animals that are missing.

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The Desert Tortoise Translocation Project at the National Training Center (NTC), Ft. Irwin, was initiated in 2005 in the Southern Expansion Area (SEA, Esque et al. 2005) with sampling of potential translocatees, resident tortoises, and control tortoises for health status. In spring of 2008, several hundred tortoises were translocated from within the boundaries of Ft. Irwin to study plots. After spring translocation in 2008, an estimated 96 tortoises still remained within Ft. Irwin boundaries and needed to be translocated, removed, or the disposition determined. Of the 96, 24 had received health evaluations in 2006 and 2007. The 96 tortoises had not been translocated for one or more reasons: 1) they were missing and could not be located; 2) the transmitters had become detached and the tortoises were lost; 3) the tortoises had tested suspect or positive with ELISA tests for either or both of the pathogens (*Mycoplasma agassizii*, *M. testudineum*) that cause upper respiratory tract disease (URTD); 4) the tortoises had one or more moderate to severe clinical signs of URTD; and/or 5) the tortoises had not previously been evaluated for health status.

The objectives of the health research team in 2008 and throughout 2009 for this part of the SEA were to: 1) conduct health evaluations on recently discovered tortoises that had not received a health evaluation, 2) re-evaluate each tortoise with suspect or positive ELISA tests for *Mycoplasma* spp., and 3) re-evaluate each tortoise with significant clinical signs of URTD. During 2008, 55 of the tortoises received health evaluations. By the end of 2008, of the 96 tortoises remaining in the SEA, transmitters had detached from 12 tortoises and the tortoises no longer could be found, and an additional 21 tortoises with radio transmitters were missing and could not be found.

By the end of 2008, we identified 33 individuals that still needed evaluations and testing in 2009: 14 individuals that had not been previously evaluated (6 of the 14 were on missing lists); 8 tortoises with previous suspect or positive ELISA tests for *M. agassizii* or *M. testudineum*; and 8 tortoises with clinical signs of URTD but negative ELISA tests. An additional 3 tortoises that had previously tested suspect or positive for

Berry and Gowan. 2010. Health status of desert tortoises remaining within Ft. Irwin's boundaries in the Southern Expansion Area in 2009.

M. testudineum in October of 2008 were in ITS/QinetiQ studies but were not available for re-testing. This report summarizes the health status of the tortoises remaining and available for sampling.

METHODS

Desert tortoises had been previously fitted with radio transmitters by field workers from ITS/QinetiQ Corporation. The identification numbers, locations, frequencies of the radio transmitters, and other information were provided by ITS/QinetiQ Corporation to the U.S. Geological Survey's Health/Research Team. Each tortoise was sought in spring of 2009 and a health evaluation was conducted, if the tortoise could be found. The health evaluations included unique identification number, size (carapace length at the mid-line in mm, MCL), weight, sex, posture, behavior, activity, recent trauma, and clinical signs of disease (e.g., URTD and cutaneous dyskeratosis) on the eyes, beak, nares, integument, and shell using a standardized seven-page form modified from an appendix in Berry and Christopher (2001). Digital photographs were taken of the eyes, beak, nares, plastron, carapace, and any unusual trauma or lesion.

During health evaluations, samples of blood were drawn either by brachial venipuncture or from the subcarapacial site using standard protocols (Hernandez-Divers et al. 2002, Berry et al. 2006). Samples of blood that contained 15% or more of lymph were considered to be suboptimal because of the potential negative impact of dilution (e.g., Gottdenker and Jacobson 1995). Where possible, such samples were repeated with an objective of obtaining 90–100% blood with no lymph or only a trace of lymph (Berry et al. 2005). A nasal lavage was taken using standard protocols (Berry et al. 2006). Blood plasma and nasal samples were shipped to the Mycoplasma Laboratory at the University of Florida to determine the presence of antibodies to *Mycoplasma agassizii* or *M. testudineum* using enzyme-linked immunoassay (ELISA) tests (Schumacher et al. 1993; Brown et al. 1994, 2001, 2004; Wendland et al. 2007). The nasal samples were cultured, and when the test was positive, polymerase chain reaction (PCR) was used to amplify the *Mycoplasma* so that it could be identified to species (Brown et al. 2002). As part of the quality assurance and control protocols, the health evaluation data sheets and digital images were compared and changes were made to the data base where necessary.

Three databases were constructed for the potential SEA translocatees. One database contains the monthly monitoring data and has been included with excel files submitted to the permit holder, Clarence Everly, for the annual permit report to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The second database summarizes tissue samples obtained and includes data on type of samples obtained (blood plasma, plasma/lymph, and nasal lavage), date of collection, volume of samples, results of ELISA tests for *M. agassizii* and *M. testudineum*, and results of PCR tests for positive or suspect cultures. The third database contains the health evaluation data sets and, as of January 2010, was undergoing quality control. This third database will also become part of the permanent database for the Ft. Irwin project but is not ready for archiving. The databases described above are provided separately to Clarence Everly, the permit holder, and are not included herein.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Health Status of 24 Tortoises

In 2009, the USGS Health team continued to monitor 9 tortoises that had been monitored in 2008 (Table 1). In May of 2009, we began monitoring an additional 7 tortoises which were previously monitored by the ITS/QinetiQ team. Unbeknownst to our team until January 2010, some of these tortoises were simultaneously monitored by both the ITS/QinetiQ team and USGS Health team in 2009. Two of the 7 tortoises had not been tracked by either research team between October 2008 and April 2009. Of these two tortoises, one (4483M) has remained missing, and the other (4232M) was located in August and September 2009 but disappeared again in October of 2009. A third tortoise (4560) of the 7 also has been missing since May of 2008, when its detached radio transmitter was located. In addition to these 16 tortoises, there were 14 tortoises (monitored by the ITS/QinetiQ team) that had never been evaluated for health; 8 of these tortoises were examined in spring of 2009 (Table 2). The other 6 were missing and could not be evaluated.

In spring, the tortoises that could be located were sampled between May 19 and 23; in fall the sampling was undertaken between October 6 and 22. During spring, 19 tortoises were evaluated for health with blood and nasal lavage samples. One tortoise (4289) was ELISA positive and 18 others were negative for *M. agassizii*. All 19 tortoises were ELISA negative for *M. testudineum*. All cultures were negative (Tables 2 and 3). During fall, 8 tortoises were re-evaluated for health. One tortoise (3111) had a suspect ELISA test and 7 others were ELISA negative for *M. agassizii* (Table 3). All 8 tortoises were ELISA negative for *M. testudineum*. The results of cultures are still pending for the fall.

The results of the most recent data on clinical signs of trauma and diseases are summarized in Table 4 for each of the 16 tortoises monitored by the USGS Health team, regardless of whether the tortoises were missing or found dead. The locations of both live and missing tortoises are shown in Fig. 1. For the 8 tortoises receiving their first health evaluations in spring of 2009, the clinical signs of trauma and disease are summarized in Table 5. Most tortoises that the USGS Health team has evaluated for the Ft. Irwin project since 2005 have had one or more clinical signs of URTD (mild edema of palpebrae, mild crusts on the palpebrae); these mild signs probably fall within normal limits of healthy tortoises. Of more interest and concern are tortoises with moderate to severe clinical signs of the ocular and nasal area. For the ocular area, these signs include mucoid drainage from the eyes, inflammation of the conjunctiva, and eyes that are closed or nearly closed and accompanied by other moderate to severe ocular signs. For the beak and nares, clinical signs of concern are those with moisture in or on the beak caused by drainage from the nares, discharge (especially purulent) from the nares, and nares occluded by a wet or dried discharge. Tortoises with signs of a nasal discharge and/or ocular discharge are more likely to have mycoplasmosis, herpes virus infections, or an infectious disease than tortoises without these clinical signs.

Since a tortoise with mycoplasmosis may have a nasal discharge intermittently (Jacobson et al. 1995), we rely on such signs as occluded or partially occluded nares, embedded mucus and dirt on the beak and around the nares, and eroded nares with peeling scales. These clinical signs provide an indication of a nasal discharge. Several tortoises (Tables 4, 5) had partially occluded nares and embedded dirt and/or mucus on the beak and face. Interpretation of the cause(s) of the occluded nares was complicated in spring by plant material from foraging. In spring of 2009, the wildflowers were plentiful. Many tortoises had green stains on the beak and remnants of sticky plant sap and plant parts on the beak. For some tortoises, the nares were partially occluded but the cause for the occlusion was not clear. To facilitate decisions on future disposition of each of the tortoises, whether the location is known or the tortoise is missing, we have made recommendations in the section titled Recommendations, below.

Dead Tortoises

Two of the tortoises were found dead in 2009. The remains of one tortoise (3453F) were located sometime between August 2008 and April 2009 by the ITS research team. Currently, we do not know the potential cause of death for the this tortoise. The second tortoise (4227F) was located dead in a rock shelter in October 2009. This tortoise was wedged tightly between the ground and the roof of the rock shelter, and the radio transmitter may have been caught on the rock shelter. The soil under the tortoise had to be excavated in order to extract the tortoise from the cover site. Once extracted, field workers noted that the entire shell was intact, the remaining soft tissue was mostly decomposed and odiferous, the radio transmitter was partially detached, and no signs of predation were evident.

Fences, Fence Gaps, and A Missing Tortoise

In September 2009, tortoise 4232M, was found walking in the open between two lines of fencing. Both lines of fencing were barbed-wire fences, with tortoise-proof fencing lining the lower 1.5 m portion of the fence. On that day, no openings or gaps in the fence were visible that would have allowed a tortoise in or out of this space. This tortoise was relocated north of the fencing (into presumed Fort Irwin boundaries) about 5 m from the location where it was found. In October 2009, we were unable to find 4232M, and were not been able to locate it in November or December of 2009. Tortoise 4232M is considered missing. While searching for the tortoise, we observed several gaps in the previously mentioned fence. Some gaps appeared to have been caused from structural damage and at least one gap was the result of a wash carving out space beneath the fence lining. Several gaps were sufficiently large to allow a tortoise to enter the corridor between two fences.

RECOMMENDATIONS

We have made recommendations for the disposition of each of the tortoises remaining within the boundaries Ft. Irwin in the SEA, regardless of whether the tortoise is alive and its location is known or whether it is missing.

1. The following SEA tortoises have not been sampled for health status since 2006 or 2007. For 2006, the identification numbers are: 2006, 4181, 4256, and 4352. For 2007, the identification numbers are 4012, 4066, 4105, 4190, 4211, 4231, 4259, 4268, 4353, 4382, 4394, 4395, 4397, 4406, 4425, 4527, 4571, 4600, 4659, and 4677. Thirteen of these tortoises are missing (see item 2. below). If any of these tortoises have had been in the vicinity of and potentially had contact with an ELISA positive tortoise or a tortoises with moderate to severe clinical signs of URTD, then they should be re-evaluated and re-tested before being translocated.
2. Thirteen tortoises that were evaluated in 2006 and 2007 for health are missing: 2006, 4352, 4012, 4353, 4382, 4394, 4397, 4406, 4425, 4527, 4571, 4600, and 4659. The status of each of these tortoises should be updated in the Ft. Irwin database. Tortoises 4012, 4397, and 4600 are shown as having detached transmitters. The rest of the tortoises are not shown as lost or the dates when last observed. When and if a missing tortoise is found, its location needs to be compared with the locations of tortoises with suspect or positive ELISA tests and signs of nasal discharge. Some of the missing tortoises, if found alive, may not be suitable for translocation.
3. Tortoises 2244 and 3405 are outside the boundaries of Ft. Irwin (see Fig. 1) and thus are not candidates for translocation based on location alone. Tortoise 2244 had an unusual clinical sign during the health evaluation in October 2009: a dried brown drainage from the left side of the mouth sufficient to stain the beak, mandible, and integument ventrally. The health status of this tortoise should continue to be tracked and the oral cavity periodically evaluated for signs of herpes virus infection. The clinical signs of URTD for tortoise 3405 are ambiguous and merit additional monitoring.
4. Tortoise 3111 is on the boundary of Plot 1.5 and the Western Expansion Area (WEA) and, in December 2009, was 100 m into the WEA. It has had three seasons of positive and suspect tests for *M. agassizi*, as well as some mild clinical signs of URTD (but no nasal discharge). (This tortoise has been tracked by both the USGS health and the ITS/Qinetiq teams.) It is not a suitable candidate for translocation.
5. Clinical signs and/or ELISA test results for tortoises 4289 and 4483 preclude translocation in 2010. Both 4289 and 4483 were missing in December 2009; if found, they should not be translocated. (In January 2010, we learned that ITS/Qinetiq has been monitoring 4289 and may have changed the transmitter and transmitter frequency.)
6. Tortoise 4232, missing in fall of 2009, should not be translocated if found. Tortoise 4232 was last evaluated for health in Fall of 2008; it was missing in spring of 2009, found and monitored briefly during summer of 2009, and then disappeared again prior to the fall health evaluation in 2009. Although this tortoise had negative ELISA tests for mycoplasmosis in 2007 and 2008, it should not be translocated until it is evaluated again.

Berry and Gowan. 2010. Health status of desert tortoises remaining within Ft. Irwin's boundaries in the Southern Expansion Area in 2009.

At the fall 2008 health evaluation, the tortoise had a wet glob (4 to 6 mm in diameter) of whitish-yellow mucus on the gular horn, apparently from the nares. Other clinical signs of URTD were also present.

7. The tortoises listed below were located and evaluated in 2009. They had negative ELISA tests for *M. agassizii* and *M. testudineum* and no wet purulent discharge. On the basis of health status alone, they could be translocated in spring of 2010 IF they show no signs of nasal moisture or discharge, occlusions of the nares, or lesions in the mouth in spring of 2010:

a. 4217 (mild to moderate clinical signs of URTD, including dried white material occluding the L nare by 30%)

b. 4525, a marginal tortoise for translocation (mild to moderate clinical signs of URTD, including crusting and closure of the eyes, dried white material, potentially exudate on the beak and nares)

c. 4704, a tortoise with two previous suspect tests for *M. testudineum* in 2007 and 2008 but negative tests in 2009 (mild to moderate clinical signs of URTD, including ocular signs and the beak and nares have a dried white material (exudate?) embedded in the integument.

d. 4438 (mild to moderate clinical signs of URTD in fall of 2009) had a suspect ELISA test for *M. agassizii* in spring of 2008 and a suspect ELISA test for *M. testudineum* in fall 2008. The ELISA tests were subsequently negative spring and fall of 2009.

e. 4625 (mild ocular signs of URTD, right naris partially occluded in spring of 2009, no fall 2009 health evaluation). This tortoise had a suspect ELISA tests for *M. testudineum* in spring of 2008, was subsequently negative in spring of 2009 for the two species of *Mycoplasma*, but was missing in fall of 2009. We learned in January of 2010 that ITS/QinetiQ has been monitoring the tortoise and may have changed the transmitter and transmitter frequency.

8. The following tortoises are missing and have not received health evaluations at any time during the life of the translocation project: 4371, 4437, 4670, 4687, 4736, and 4749. If any of these tortoises are located, they will need to be evaluated before translocation occurs.

9. Tortoises 3111, 4289, 4438, and 4625 were monitored by both the USGS Health team and the ITS QinetiQ team after May 2009. The responsibilities for these tortoises should be resolved, so that only one team is monitoring each tortoise. All of these tortoises have previously tested positive or suspect for mycoplasmosis.

REFERENCES

Berry, K.H. and M.M. Christopher. 2001. Guidelines for the field evaluation of desert tortoise health and disease. *Journal of Wildlife Diseases* 37(3): 427-450.

- Berry and Gowan. 2010. Health status of desert tortoises remaining within Ft. Irwin's boundaries in the Southern Expansion Area in 2009.
- Berry, K.H., L.D. Wendland, A. Demmon, and M.B. Brown. 2005. A comparison of lymph and plasma sample results from ELISA tests for *Mycoplasma agassizii* in desert tortoises. Presentation and Abstract from the 30th Annual Desert Tortoise Council Symposium, held in Tucson, Arizona. February 2005.
- Berry, K.H., A. Demmon, T. Bailey, and J. Mack. 2006. Protocols for drawing blood from the brachial plexus and subcarapacial site of desert tortoises: Instructions for Ordering Equipment and Culture Media; Summary of How to Draw Blood and Information on How to Contract for Laboratory Analysis and Shipping Laboratory Samples. Appendix on New Technique for Conducting Nasal Lavages by L. Wendland. U.S. Geological Survey, Moreno Valley, CA. 14 p.
- Brown, D.R., I.M. Schumacher, G.S. McLaughlin, L.D. Wendland, M.B. Brown, P.A. Klein, and E. R. Jacobson. 2002. Application of diagnostic tests for mycoplasmal infections of desert and gopher tortoises, with management recommendations. *Chelonian Conservation Biology* 4(2):497-507.
- Brown, D.R., J.L. Merritt, E. R. Jacobson, P.A. Klein, J.G. Tully, and M.B. Brown. 2004. *Mycoplasma testudineum* sp. nov., from a desert tortoise (*Gopherus agassizii*) with upper respiratory tract disease. *International Journal of Systematic and Evolutionary Microbiology* 45(5):1527-1529.
- Brown, M.B., I.M. Shumacher, P.A. Klein, K. Harris, T. Correll, and E.R. Jacobson. 1994. *Mycoplasma agassizii* causes upper respiratory tract disease in the desert tortoise. *Infection and Immunity* 62(10):4580-4586.
- Brown, M.B., D.R. Brown, P.A. Klein, G.S. McLaughlin, I.M. Schumacher, E.R. Jacobson, H.P. Adams, and J.G. Tully. 2001. *Mycoplasma agassizii* sp. nov., isolated from the upper respiratory tract of the desert tortoise (*Gopherus agassizii*) and the gopher tortoise (*Gopherus polyphemus*). *International Journal of Systematic and Evolutionary Microbiology* 51:413-418.
- Gottdenker, N.L., and E.R. Jacobson. 1995. Effect of venipuncture sites on hematologic and clinical biochemical values in desert tortoises (*Gopherus agassizii*). *American Journal of Veterinary Research* 56(1):19-21.
- Esque, T.C., K.E. Nussear, and P.A. Medica. 2005. Desert tortoise translocation plan for Fort Irwin's Land Expansion Program at the U.S. Army National Training Center (NTC) & Fort Irwin. U.S. Geological Survey, Henderson, Nevada. 24 June 2005.
- Hernandez-Divers, S.M., S.J. Hernandez-Divers, and J. Wyneken. 2002. Angiographic, anatomic and clinical technique descriptions of a subcarapacial venipuncture site for chelonians. *Journal of Herpetological Medicine and Surgery* 12(2):32-37.

Berry and Gowan. 2010. Health status of desert tortoises remaining within Ft. Irwin's boundaries in the Southern Expansion Area in 2009.

Jacobson, E. R., M. B. Brown, I. M. Schumacher, B. R. Collins, R. K. Harris, and P. A. Klein. 1995. Mycoplasmosis and the desert tortoise (*Gopherus agassizii*) in Las Vegas Valley, Nevada. *Chelonian Conservation and Biology* 1:279–284.

Schumacher, I.M., M.B. Brown, E.R. Jacobson, B.R. Collins, and P.A. Klein. 1993. Detection of antibodies to a pathogenic mycoplasma in desert tortoises (*Gopherus agassizii*) with upper respiratory tract disease. *Journal of Clinical Microbiology* 31:1454-1460.

Wendland, L., L.A. Zacher, P.A. Klein, D.R. Brown, D. Demcovitz, R. Littell, and M.B. Brown. 2007. Improved Enzyme-Linked Immunosorbent Assay to reveal *Mycoplasma agassizii* exposure: A valuable tool in the management of environmentally sensitive tortoise populations. *Clinical and Vaccine Immunology* 14:1190-1195.

Table 1. List of tortoises monitored by USGS Health team in 2009 and currently located in the Southern Expansion Area, with notes on status and history. Tortoises in the USGS Health group were being monitored prior to 2009, those in the ITS transfer group were transferred from the ITS research team to the USGS Health team in the spring of 2009, and those in the USGS Health and ITS/QinetiQ group were simultaneously monitored by both research teams from May through December 2009. ITS/QinetiQ may be aware of locations of missing tortoises 3111, 4289, 4438 and 4265 and may have changed their transmitters.

ID	Sex	MCL (mm)	Group	Status	Note
2244	M	288	USGS Health	Alive	
3405	M	267	USGS Health	Alive	
3453	F	207	USGS Health & ITS QinetiQ	Dead	Died between Oct 2008 and Apr 2009
4144	M	272	USGS Health	Missing since May 2009	
4217	M	286	USGS Health	Alive	
4227	F	216	USGS Health	Dead	
4525	M	261	USGS Health	Alive	
4616	F	221	USGS Health	Missing since July 2009	
4704	M	266	USGS Health	Alive	
3111	M	261	USGS Health & ITS/QinetiQ	Alive	At boundary of Plot 1.5 and WEA
4232	M	243	ITS transfer	Missing since Oct 2009	Not tracked Oct 2008-Apr 2009; located in Aug and Sep 2009
4289	M	264	USGS Health & ITS/QinetiQ	Missing since Nov 2009	
4438	F	196	USGS Health & ITS/QinetiQ	Alive	
4483	M	242	ITS transfer	Missing since Oct 2008	Not tracked Oct 2008-Apr 2009
4560	Imm	Unk	ITS transfer	Missing since May 2008	Detached radio found; no live or dead tortoise located
4625	F	231	USGS Health & ITS/QinetiQ	Missing since Oct 2009	

Berry and Gowan. 2010. Health status of desert tortoises remaining within Ft. Irwin's boundaries in the Southern Expansion Area in 2009.

Table 2. List of tortoises living in the SEA and results of their first health evaluations in spring of 2009. These tortoises are not being monitored monthly by the USGS Health Research team.

Tortoise ID	Size (MCL, mm)	Sex	Laboratory test results		
			<i>M. agassizii</i>	<i>M. testudineum</i>	Cultures
4147	234	F	Negative	Negative	Negative
4191	286	M	Negative	Negative	Negative
4642	266	M	Negative	Negative	Negative
4679	218	F	Negative	Negative	Negative
4686	206	F	Negative	Negative	Negative
4699	264	M	Negative	Negative	Negative
4734	244	F	Negative	Negative	Negative
4748	246	M	Negative	Negative	Negative

Table 3. Summary of ELISA test results for *Mycoplasma agassizii* and *M. testudineum* of desert tortoises currently located in the Southern Expansion Area and currently monitored by the USGS Health team. Green cells represent negative status on ELISA tests, orange cells represent suspect status, and red cells represent positive test results. Tortoises with suspect tests in the spring of 2008 were sampled again that season, and both results are reported.

ID	Status	<i>M. agassizii</i>						<i>M. testudineum</i>						
		Fa07	Sp08	Fa08	Sp09	Fa09	Fa07	Sp08	Fa08	Sp09	Fa09			
2244	Alive													
3111	Alive	N/A	Sus>Pos								N/A			
3405	Alive													
3453	Dead	N/A		N/A	N/A	N/A					N/A		N/A	N/A
4144	Missing	N/A		N/A	N/A	N/A					N/A		N/A	N/A
4217	Alive													
4227	Dead	N/A				N/A					N/A			N/A
4232	Missing				N/A	N/A							N/A	N/A
4289	Alive (ITS)													
4438	Alive		Sus>Neg											
4483	Missing				N/A	N/A							N/A	N/A
4525	Alive													
4560	Missing		N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A					N/A		N/A	N/A
4616	Missing					N/A								N/A
4625	Missing	N/A												N/A
4704	Alive													

Table 4. Clinical signs of disease in potential translocatee tortoises remaining within the boundaries of Ft. Irwin.

Tort No.	Last health evaluation: Season/yr	Age	Sex	MCL (mm)	Weight (g)	Clinical signs of trauma and disease		
						Trauma	Shell disease, limb lesions	Upper respiratory tract disease
2244	Fall 2009	Adult	M	286	3950	No appreciable trauma	MILD: cutaneous dyskeratosis, ringing at base of scales on forelimbs, medial seam of plastron has white discoloration; carapace –some scutes have mild peeling, flaking of laminae typical of this age of tortoise (shell wear class 5).	MILD: Beak has dried material, dried brown drainage from mouth (L side) onto chin, skin posterior to gular horn ; R nare 20% occluded with dry dirt and/or exudate. None to mild edema of palpebrae and upper periocular area; crusts on palpebrae, mucus string in R eye; R eye 40% closed, L eye 80% closed; conjunctiva not visible –eyes closed
3111	Fall 2009	Adult	M	254	2725	Moderate to severe old trauma (healed) to gular and ant. humeral scutes	Mild to Moderate: cutaneous dyskeratosis, ringing at base of scales on forelimbs; seams on plastron have white discoloration and peeling, flaking laminae.	MILD: edema of lower palpebrae of both eyes, and crusts on upper and lower palpebrae and periorculars of both eyes; wet discharge on globe of L eye; both palpebra 40% closed; R nare is 5% occluded
3405	Fall 2009	Adult	M	266	3200	NONE:	MILD: cutaneous dyskeratosis, ringing at base of scales on forelimbs; all seams of plastron may be lightened, scutes of plastron and gular have peeling and flaking laminae	MILD to MODERATE: discoloration, edema, and crusts on upper and lower palpebrae and periorculars of both eyes, dried discharge from both eyes and both palpebra 50% closed; beak and nares have a dried white exudate (?) and both nares are 50% occluded (KB noted that nares are not occluded in photo).

Table 4, continued. Clinical signs of disease in potential translocatee tortoises remaining within the boundaries of Ft. Irwin.

Tort No.	Last health evaluation: Season/yr	Age	Sex	MCL (mm)	Weight (g)	Clinical signs of trauma and disease		
						Trauma	Shell disease, limb lesions	Upper respiratory tract disease
3453	Spring 2008	Adult	F	207	2175	SEVERE: Right forelimb 50% missing and some scales missing from both forelimbs. MODERATE: healing trauma to gular; many other old healed chew marks	MILD: cutaneous dyskeratosis, ringing at base of scales on forelimbs; laminae peeling and flaking on gular	MILD: crusts and edema of lower palpebrae and upper perioculars of both eyes; embedded dirt in beak and around and in nares; peeling scales around nares
4144	Spring 2008	Adult	M	272	4050	SEVERE: old healed trauma to gular and humeral scutes. MILD: a few other old healed chips	MILD: cutaneous dyskeratosis, ringing at base of scales on forelimbs	MILD to MODERATE: edema on lower palpebrae of both eyes; wet and dry crusts on upper and lower palpebrae and periocular areas of both eyes; mucus in R eye; peeling scales on periocular area. Dirt embedded in integument of face.
4217	Fall 2009	Adult	M	285	4200	No appreciable signs	Age based changes to shell: all scutes of plastron and gular have peeling laminae. MILD: cutaneous dyskeratosis; ringing at base of scales on forelimbs	MILD to MODERATE: edema on upper and lower palpebrae of both eyes; mild crusts and wet and dried discharge from both eyes; both palpebrae partially closed (40%R, 50%L); beak and L nare has a dried white material (exudate or soil) and L nare is 30% occluded
4227	Spring 2009 (found dead Oct. 6, 2009)	Adult	F	215	2275	No appreciable signs	MILD: many seams of plastron have peeling laminae	MILD to MODERATE: edema of upper and lower palpebrae of both eyes; periocular area of both eyes have peeling scales; mild crusts on palpebrae of L eye; both palpebrae partially closed (30%); dried discharge from both nares, L nare is 50% occluded

Table 4, continued. Clinical signs of disease in potential translocatee tortoises remaining within the boundaries of Ft. Irwin.

Tort No.	Last health evaluation: Season/yr	Age	Sex	MCL (mm)	Weight (g)	Clinical signs of trauma and disease		
						Trauma	Shell disease	Upper respiratory tract disease
4232	Fall 2008 (found trapped Sept 28, 2009; then missing)	Adult	M	243	2400	A few healed chips	Mild: cutaneous dyskeratosis, ringing at base of scales on forelimbs; plastron has lightened, flaking discoloration in all seams	MILD to SEVERE: edema, and crusts on palpebrae and perioculars of both eyes; peeling scales around both eyes; dried discharge from both eyes and both palpebra closed (15%); beak and L nares have a dried, white, exudate/dirt(?) and both nares are partially occluded; a thick, whitish-yellow exudate (4-6 mm) is present on gular
4289	Fall 2009	Adult	M	262	3150	SEVERE, limited to gular and anterior humeral scutes (old predator attack)	MILD: cutaneous dyskeratosis, forelimbs have ringing at base of scales. MODERATE: plastron seams are discolored, light.	MODERATE to SEVERE: edema, and crusts on upper and lower palpebrae of both eyes, dried and wet discharge from both eyes and both palpebrae closed (80%R, 100%L); beak and L nares have a dried, white, exudate and both nares are partially occluded
4438	Fall 2009	Adult	F	195	1300	NONE: a few healed chips	MODERATE: cutaneous dyskeratosis or new growth: ringing at base of scales of forelimbs; mild discoloration at medial seam of plastron; carapace -all seams have white discoloration	MILD to MODERATE: edema and crusts on upper and lower palpebrae of both eyes, palpebrae partially closed (40%R, 15%L); both eyes mildly recessed
4483	Fall 2008	Adult	M	242	2725	Minimal: a few healed chips	SEVERE: cutaneous dyskeratosis, ringing at base of scales on forelimbs; moderate flaking and lightening of laminae on dorsal surface of gular; flaking, lightening, discoloration of plastron seams	MILD: edema and crusts on upper and lower palpebrae of both eyes, peeling scales on periocular area of both eyes; discharge (dried) at fomix of both eyes; palpebra partially closed (15%R, 20%L); moist and dried exudate on beak and nares; embedding dirt and/or exudate on beak

Table 4, continued. Clinical signs of disease in potential translocatee tortoises remaining within the boundaries of Ft. Irwin.

Tort No.	Last health evaluation:	Age	Sex	MCL (mm)	Weight (g)	Trauma	Shell disease	Clinical signs of trauma and disease	Upper respiratory tract disease
4525	Fall 2009	Adult	M	260	2950	No appreciable signs	MODERATE: cutaneous dyskeratosis, ringing at base of scales of forelimbs; peeling and flaking of laminae on gular, also on scutes of carapace; seams of carapace with lightened discoloration; mild lightening and discoloration to medial seam of plastron		MILD to MODERATE: discoloration, edema, and crusts on upper and lower palpebrae and periocular area of both eyes, dried discharge from both eyes and both palpebra partially closed (60%R, 70%L); beak and nares have a dried white material (exudate?)
4560	Fall 2007	Imm	Unk	160	710	No appreciable signs	MILD: plastron has white discoloration along seams. MODERATE: cutaneous dyskeratosis, ringing at base of scales on forelimbs.		MILD: edema and crusts on upper and lower palpebrae of both eyes; discharge from R eye; nares have dried, matted exudate and are partially occluded (R rare 100%, L rare moderate occlusion)
4616	Spring 2009	Adult	F	220	2450	No appreciable signs	MILD: cutaneous dyskeratosis, ringing at base of scales on forelimbs; carapace-all scutes have flaking laminae; plastron seams have pale yellow discoloration and flaking		MILD to MODERATE: edema, and crusts on upper and lower palpebrae and periocular area of both eyes, peritoculals have peeling scales; wet/dried discharge from both eyes and both palpebra partially closed (15%R, 20%L); nares have moist/dried white/cloudy exudate/dirt and are occluded (10%R, 40%L). Severe embedded dirt around eyes, beak, and nares
4625	Spring 2009	Adult	F	231	2750	Severe old damage to gular; healing of several chewed scales on forelegs	MILD: age-related changes on scutes; some seams of plastron have light-colored discoloration and peeling laminae		MILD: discoloration, crusts, and peeling scales on both eyes; moderate edema of upper periocular area and mild to lower periocular area, wet discharge; R eye with wet and dry crusts on palpebrae, mild edema of the periocular area; conjunctivae is 10% exposed in both eyes; R rare is partially occluded (10%)

Table 4, continued. Clinical signs of disease in potential translocatee tortoises remaining within the boundaries of Ft. Irwin.

Tort No.	Last health evaluation: Season/yr	Age	Sex	MCL (mm)	Weight (g)	Clinical signs of trauma and disease		
						Trauma	Shell disease	Upper respiratory tract disease
4704	Fall 2009	Adult	M	266	2900	NONE:	MILD: cutaneous dyskeratosis, ringing at base of scales of forelimbs; all seams of plastron have pale flaking laminae	MILD to MODERATE: edema, and crusts on upper and lower palpebrae and periocular area of both eyes, dried and wet discharge from both eyes and both palpebra partially closed (30%); eyes are mildly swollen and recessed; conjunctivae is 20% exposed in both eyes; beak and nares have a dried, white, material (exudate?) embedded in the integument

Table 5. Clinical signs of disease and trauma in tortoises sampled for the first time in 2009. The tortoises were within the boundaries of Ft. Irwin in the Southern Expansion Area.

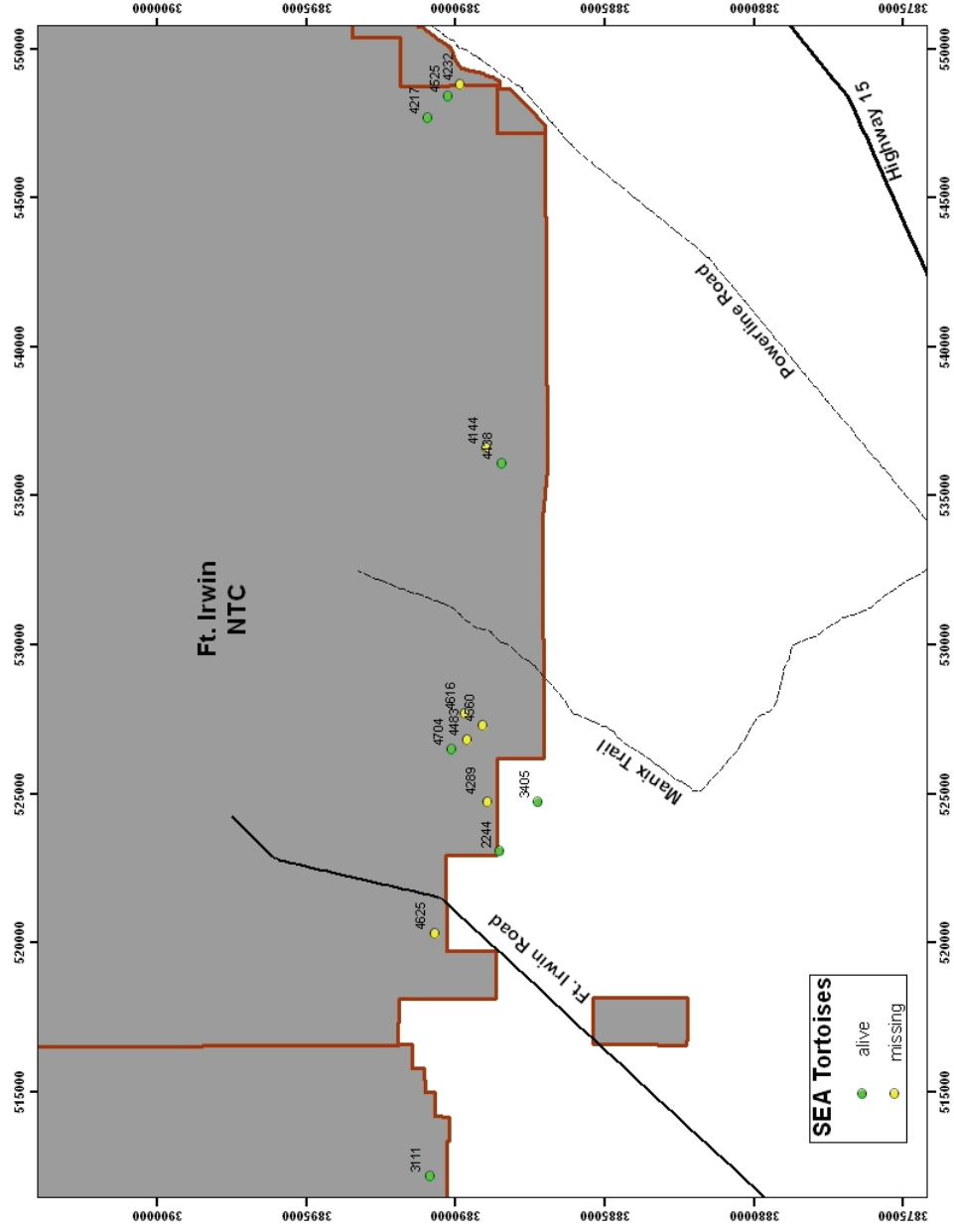
Tort No.	Last health evaluation	Age	Sex	MCL (mm)	Weight (g)	Clinical signs of trauma and disease		
						Trauma	Shell disease	Upper respiratory tract disease
4147	Spring 2009	Adult	F	234	2350	No appreciable damage	MILD, age-related changes to seams of plastron and lightened discoloration and peeling of laminae	MILD edema and peeling scales on palpebrae and periocular area of both eyes; moderate wet and dry crusts on palpebrae and periocular area of both eyes; both eyes 20% closed; conjunctiva is visible in L eye (5%)
4191	Spring 2009	Adult	M	286	4650	No appreciable damage	MILD to MODERATE: cutaneous dyskeratosis, ringing at base of scales of forelimbs; seams of gular and plastron have whitish discoloration	MILD to MODERATE: edema, crusts, and peeling scales, on palpebrae and periocular area of both eyes, L eye has dried discharge; both palpebrae partially closed (15%); conjunctiva is visible (R 20%, L 15%); nares may have exudate and L nare is partially occluded (5%); embedded dirt/food in beak
4642	Spring 2009	Adult	M	266	3850	No appreciable damage	MILD to MODERATE: age-related changes to seams of plastron; scutes of plastron and carapace have flaking, peeling laminae	MILD: discoloration, wet and dry crusts, and peeling scales on palpebrae and periocular area of both eyes; L eye has wet mucus; both eyes have dried discharge and conjunctiva is visible (R 5%, L 10%); nares have dried exudate or dirt and are partially occluded (R 10%, L 5%)
4679	Spring 2009	Adult	F	218	2250	Moderate healing trauma, including missing R hind foot pad, scales on R foreleg	MILD: seams of plastron have yellowish discoloration and peeling laminae	MILD to MODERATE: discoloration and crusts on upper and lower palpebrae and periocular area of both eyes, periocular area has edema, peeling scales; both palpebrae partially closed (50%); nares have a dried white exudate (?) and are occluded (10%). Very dirty face, beak, and eyes with dirt embedded in integument

Table 5, continued. Clinical signs of disease and trauma in tortoises sampled for the first time in 2009. The tortoises were within the boundaries of Ft. Irwin in the Southern Expansion Area.

Tort No.	Last health evaluation	Age	Sex	MCL (mm)	Weight (g)	Clinical signs of trauma and disease		
						Trauma	Shell disease	Upper respiratory tract disease
4686	Spring 2009	Adult	F	206	2250	Old healed punctures or bites to gular and other areas (small)	MILD: laminae and seams of plastron have yellowish discoloration, flaking	MILD to MODERATE: discoloration, edema, and crusts on upper and lower palpebrae and periocular area of both eyes, lower periocular areas have peeling scales; both palpebrae are nearly closed (R 90%, L 80%); L nare partially occluded (5%). Very dirty beak and eyes, with dirt embedded in integument.
4699	Spring 2009	Adult	M	264	3825	NONE: a few healed chips	MILD: cutaneous dyskeratosis, ringing of scales on forelimbs; gular and plastron has lightened flaking discoloration in most seams	MILD: discoloration, crusts on palpebrae and periocular area of both eyes; peeling scales on periocular area; conjunctiva is visible in both eyes (5%); edema only on R palpebrae; eyes recessed.
4734	Spring 2009	Adult	F	244	2925	No appreciable damage	SEVERE: gular has white discoloration and flaking on dorsal and ventral surfaces. MODERATE: carapace has yellow flaking on laminae; plastron has white flaking discoloration in all seams; ringing on scales of forelimbs	MILD: discoloration, crusts, and peeling scales on palpebrae and periocular area of both eyes, both eyes 20% closed; edema of palpebrae of R eye and drainage from R eye; conjunctiva is visible in both eyes (10%)
4748	Spring 2009	Adult	M	246	3000	A few healed areas with scute/bone replacement and damaged scales on forelegs.	MODERATE: active cutaneous dyskeratosis, gular and plastron have whitish discoloration at seams;	MILD discoloration and peeling scales on palpebrae and periocular area of both eyes; moderate to severe crusts on palpebrae and periocular area of both eyes; both eyes very dirty and recessed ventrally; conjunctiva is visible in both eyes (R 5%. L 10%); R nare is partially occluded (10%)

Berry and Gowan. 2010. Health status of desert tortoises remaining within Ft. Irwin's boundaries in the Southern Expansion Area in 2009.

Fig 1. Last known locations of tortoises known to be alive and those missing in and around the Southern Expansion Area.



PROGRESS REPORT FOR 2009

The Health Status of Translocated Desert Tortoises (*Gopherus agassizii*) in the Fort Irwin Translocation Area and Surrounding Release Plots, San Bernardino County, California: Year 2

Timothy Gowan and Kristin H. Berry (Principal Investigator)

U. S. Geological Survey
Western Ecological Research Center
22835 Calle San Juan de Los Lagos
Moreno Valley, California 92553

for

Commander National Training Center and Fort Irwin
ATTN: AFZJ-PW-EV, Mr. Clarence Everly
P.O. Box 105097
Fort Irwin, CA 92310-5097

The Health Status of Translocated Desert Tortoises (*Gopherus agassizii*) in the Fort Irwin Translocation Area and Surrounding Release Plots, San Bernardino County, California

Abstract. In spring of 2008, we translocated 158 adult and subadult tortoises (82 females and 76 males) from the Southern Expansion Area (SEA) to four plots located in the Superior-Cronese Desert Wildlife Management Area (DWMA) as part of the Desert Tortoise Health and Disease Research Project for the Ft. Irwin Expansion. Long-term objectives include modeling and predicting effects of translocation on survival of tortoises by health status, presence of infectious diseases and trauma, size and age class, and sex. Tortoises were placed in 4 health categories: 1) healthy or control tortoises, 2) tortoises with moderate to severe clinical signs of past trauma, 3) tortoises with moderate to severe clinical signs of shell disease, and 4) tortoises with moderate to severe clinical signs of upper respiratory tract disease but with no evidence of nasal discharge and negative laboratory tests.

As of December 2008, 43 of the initial 158 translocated tortoises had been found dead or had been salvaged for necropsy, and an additional 15 tortoises were missing. We started Year 2 in January 2009, with 100 live tortoises and 15 missing tortoises in the project. During 2009, we conducted health evaluations for clinical signs of health, disease, and trauma for 81 tortoises in the spring and 65 tortoises in the fall. In the spring 4 (4.9%) and 2 (2.5%) tortoises had positive or suspect ELISA tests for *Mycoplasma agassizii* and *M. testudineum*, respectively. In the fall 6 of 65 (9.2%) tortoises tested positive or suspect for *M. agassizii*; none had positive or suspect tests for *M. testudineum*. Overall during 2009, 9 of 81 individual tortoises (11.1%) had ELISA test results that were positive or suspect for *Mycoplasma* species. When weights of tortoises were compared for 2008 and 2009, spring weights were significantly higher than fall weights. In addition, weights in fall 2009 were significantly lower than weights in fall 2008.

Between January and December of 2009, 27 (23.5%) of the remaining 115 live and missing tortoises were found dead. Of the 27, 24 were probably killed by coyotes or other canids, one was killed by a vehicle, and 2 died of unknown causes. Overall, since the translocation began in March of 2008, 44.3% of tortoises have been found dead or were salvaged for necropsy. Combining data from 2008 and 2009, death rates were significantly higher on two plots, plots 3 and 5, than on plots 1.5 and 8. In contrast to 2008, in 2009 the size of a tortoise was not related to risk of death; the average carapace length did not differ from those still alive. Likewise, in contrast to 2008, in 2009 death rates did not differ between sexes. Death rates also did not differ significantly among the four health categories. At the end of 2009, an additional 20 tortoises (17.4%, 20/115) were missing.

We analyzed movement patterns for live tortoises between the time of initial release in spring 2008 and December 2009 (N = 68). Overall, the mean dispersal distance for males was twice that of females; likewise, males moved twice the total distances compared to females. Total distances moved were higher on plots 3 and 5 than

on plots 1.5 and 8 but were not significantly different. However, the minimum total distances moved in 2009 were significantly less than in 2008. Females were more likely to use the same cover sites between 2008 and 2009 than males, a potential indication of settling.

INTRODUCTION

The desert tortoise (*Gopherus agassizii*) is a Federally- and State-listed threatened species. Critical habitat for the species occurs north and west of the Colorado River/Grand Canyon complex, including habitat on and adjacent to the National Training Center, Ft. Irwin, in the central Mojave Desert (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service 1990, 1994). As part of the Ft. Irwin Translocation Project, an estimated 600 to 1000 tortoises have been or are planned to be translocated from the southern and western parts of the expanded Ft. Irwin base to areas outside the Ft. Irwin boundary (Esque et al. 2005).

The primary goal of this research project is to monitor the health and disease status of the translocated tortoises, with an emphasis on the spread of infectious disease. Because infectious diseases have been linked to declining desert tortoise populations (Jacobson et al. 1991; Brown et al. 1994, 1999; Homer et al. 1998; Christopher et al. 2003), the incidence of disease is a critical factor in determining success of translocation. We designed our project to measure the success of translocation, depending on health status of translocated tortoises. Specifically, the translocated tortoises were grouped into one of four health categories: 1) healthy or control tortoises, without moderate to severe clinical signs of infectious disease, trauma, or shell disease; 2) tortoises with moderate to severe clinical signs of past trauma; 3) tortoises with moderate to severe clinical signs of shell disease; and 4) tortoises with moderate to severe clinical signs of upper respiratory tract disease (URTD), but with no evidence of nasal discharge and negative laboratory tests.

Several long-term objectives are to be addressed during the life of the multi-year project. First, we are tracking and sampling tortoises for several years to model and predict the effects of translocation on survival by health status, size and age class, and sex. More specifically, we hope to determine whether or not translocatees in each of the four health categories develop new disease, more severe clinical signs of URTD, more severe cases of shell disease, or new trauma post-translocation. To better understand the epidemiology and distribution of mycoplasmosis or URTD in the Ft. Irwin Translocation Project area, the health status of tortoises and locations of tortoises that have previously tested positive or suspect for mycoplasmosis are being continuously monitored. As part of these analyses, we are also examining differences in survivorship and causes of death among health status categories; differences in survivorship among size and age classes, sexes, and translocation release sites; and differences in the pathogenesis of mycoplasmosis among size and age classes, sexes, and levels of anthropogenic impacts.

Second, the anthropogenic factors most likely to influence translocation success need to be identified and modeled. Anthropogenic factors include but are not limited to

roads, military maneuver areas, and rural or urban areas. Third, ecological factors, including landscape and topography, are other variables in the analysis. Both anthropogenic and ecological factors have the potential of affecting health status and degree of trauma of translocated tortoises. We will also explore differences in survivorship among size and age classes and sexes by comparing habitat conditions between initial capture sites and translocation release sites, including levels of anthropogenic disturbance at original home sites and release sites.

This report is a progress report summarizing the status of 158 tortoises that were translocated in the spring of 2008 and were subsequently monitored for health and disease (Berry et al. 2009). Briefly, in spring of 2008, a total of 82 females and 76 males were translocated from the Southern Expansion Area (SEA) to four plots located in the Superior-Cronese Desert Wildlife Management Area (DWMA). As of December 2008, 43 of the initial 158 translocated tortoises had been found dead (41) or salvaged for necropsy (2), and an additional 15 tortoises were unable to be located and were considered missing. We started the 2009 field season in January with 100 remaining tortoises. In addressing the previously stated objectives, we tracked the remaining translocated tortoises monthly, continued to search for missing tortoises, conducted health evaluations on the tortoises during spring and fall, analyzed movement patterns and use of cover sites, and determined causes of death for dead individuals. Our preliminary findings for 2009 are summarized below.

METHODS

Translocation

Between March 26 and April 8, 2008, 158 desert tortoises were translocated from the SEA to one of four designated plots (plots 1.5, 3, 5, and 8; see Fig. 1). These translocation plots, each about one square mile in size, are located outside the Ft. Irwin boundary and are within or bordering the Superior-Cronese DWMA. Prior to translocation, tortoises located in the SEA were fitted with radiotransmitters and were assigned to one of the following four health status categories based on previous health evaluations: 1) healthy tortoises, without moderate to severe clinical signs of infectious disease, trauma, or shell disease; 2) tortoises with moderate to severe clinical signs of past trauma; 3) tortoises with moderate to severe clinical signs of shell disease; and 4) tortoises with moderate to severe clinical signs of URTD, but with no evidence of nasal discharge and negative laboratory tests. Approximately 20 adult males and 20 adult females in each of the four health status categories were selected to be translocated (Berry et al. 2009). Tortoises that had previously tested positive for mycoplasmosis or had signs of nasal discharge were not considered for translocation.

Tortoises were tracked daily, then weekly, and finally at least once per month after translocation using radio telemetry (Berry et al. 2009). Beginning in July 2008, all translocated tortoises were tracked on a monthly basis, unless behavioral or health reasons dictated more frequent checks. Upon locating tortoises during monthly tracking, critical data were recorded, including, but not limited to: date, weather conditions, time

observed, location in UTMs (NAD 83), behavioral observations, specific location of the tortoise (e.g., inside cover site, in open, under shrub), interactions with other tortoises, and general condition of the tortoise (e.g. appearing ill, stressed, lethargic, or healthy). When tortoises were located and found to be dead, the location, position, and condition of remains, along with evidence for cause of death were recorded and the remains were photographed.

Health Evaluations

Periodically, comprehensive health evaluations of each tortoise were conducted. In general, the health status of each tortoise was evaluated once in the spring (April 27 to May 4) and once in the fall (October 7 to October 27) in 2009, but these evaluations were more frequent for tortoises showing indications of illness or stress. The evaluations included recording data regarding posture, behavior, activity, recent trauma, and clinical signs of disease, such as URTD and cutaneous dyskeratosis, on the eyes, beak, nares, integument, and shell on a standardized seven-page form modified from an appendix in Berry and Christopher (2001). Length at the carapace midline (MCL) and weight of each tortoise were measured during evaluations, and digital photographs were taken of the eyes, beak, nares, plastron, carapace, and any unusual trauma or lesions. Blood and nasal lavage samples were also collected during health evaluations.

Samples of blood were drawn either by brachial venipuncture or from the subcarapacial site using standard protocols (Hernandez-Divers et al. 2002, Berry et al. 2006). Samples of blood that contained 15% or more of lymph were considered to be suboptimal because of the potential negative impact of dilution (e.g., Gottdenker and Jacobson 1995). Where possible, such samples were repeated with an objective of obtaining 90–100% blood with no lymph or only a trace of lymph (Berry et al. 2005). A nasal lavage was taken using standard protocols (Berry et al. 2006). Blood plasma and nasal samples were shipped to the Mycoplasma Laboratory at the University of Florida to determine the presence of antibodies to *Mycoplasma agassizii* or *M. testudineum* using enzyme-linked immunoassay (ELISA) tests (Schumacher et al. 1993; Brown et al. 1994, 2004; Wendland et al. 2007). Cultures and polymerase chain reaction tests (Brown et al. 2002) were also used. The laboratory procedures are summarized in Berry (2006).

Three primary databases were constructed for each calendar year. One database is the monthly monitoring with dates and locations in UTMs. The second database summarizes tissue samples obtained and includes data on type of samples obtained (blood plasma, plasma/lymph, and nasal lavage), date of collection, volume of samples, results of ELISA tests for *M. agassizii* and *M. testudineum*, and results of polymerase chain reaction tests for positive or suspect cultures. The first two databases are being transmitted separately to Clarence Everly, permit holder, for the federal U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service permit. They contain all Ft. Irwin-related data sets. The third database contains the data collected from health evaluations, including clinical signs of disease and trauma. This database is still in the process of receiving quality assurance and control and will be provided at a later time.

Movement Patterns

Two variables relating to movement patterns were calculated for the translocated tortoises. The first variable, dispersal distance, was calculated as the straight-line distance between the point of release and the location furthest from the release point at which the tortoise was located. The second variable, minimum total distance, was calculated as the summation of the straight-line distances between consecutive locations. Both of these measurements were calculated with straight-line distances and, as such, should be considered conservative estimates. Only live tortoises with known locations (i.e., those not dead or missing) as of December 2009 were used in these analyses (n = 68).

To determine the degree of settlement of translocated tortoises, the minimum total distance moved in 2008 was compared to that in 2009 for the 68 tortoises described above. Fidelity to cover sites was also examined (n = 68) by comparing summer (July and August) and winter (December and January) cover site locations for 2008 and 2009. The distance moved each month by these 68 tortoises was also plotted to examine seasonal and annual variation in movements patterns and differences between sexes. Finally, the number of tortoises still remaining on each plot (i.e. within the one square mile boundary of the initial release plots) was compared to the number of tortoises that have dispersed from the plot.

Data Analysis

We used repeated measures ANOVA to examine changes in weight within individual tortoises across seasons after translocation. A post hoc test was used to determine which seasons differed. Only tortoises with weight data for all four seasons (spring 2008, fall 2008, spring 2009, and fall 2009) were used in this analysis (n = 64).

One-way ANOVAs were used to compare movement variables (dispersal distance and minimum total distance) between sexes and among plots. A paired t-test was used to compare minimum total distances between 2008 and 2009. Because tortoises were released at translocation sites in March-early April 2008, we analyzed and compared movements from March-December of 2008 with movements from March-December 2009.

Fisher's exact tests were used to compare cover site fidelity between sexes, as well as death rates between translocation plots, between sexes, and between health categories (healthy, shell disease, URTD, or trauma). Fisher's exact tests were also used to compare the proportion of tortoises still remaining within plot boundaries among translocation sites and among sexes. One-way ANOVAs were used to compare the sizes (MCL) of tortoises that died to those still alive. All statistical tests were conducting using SYSTAT Software version 12.0 (SYSTAT Software Inc. 2007).

RESULTS

Summary of 2008

A total of 82 females and 76 males were translocated from the SEA to plots located in the DWMA. Of the 158 translocated tortoises, 21 females and 17 males were translocated to Plot 1.5, 21 females and 19 males were translocated to Plot 3, 19 females and 20 males were translocated to Plot 5, and 21 females and 20 males were translocated to Plot 8. As of December 2008, 43 of the initial 158 translocated tortoises were found dead (41) or salvaged for necropsy (2), and an additional 15 tortoises were unable to be located at the time and were considered missing. As of December 2008, the locations of 100 live tortoises were known. The sex ratio of these tortoises was 44 females and 56 males.

Health Evaluations

In January 2009, 44 females and 56 males were known to be alive; in December 2009, 32 females and 36 males were known to be alive. Comprehensive health evaluations were conducted on 81 translocated tortoises in the spring of 2009 (April 27 to May 4). Blood plasma and nasal lavage samples were also collected from each of these 81 tortoises. Three of these blood samples (3.7%) were a blood/lymph mixture, with at least 90% of the sample composed of blood; the remaining samples were composed of 100% blood. As of the end of spring of 2009, 55 tortoises had been found dead or salvaged for necropsy and 22 were unable to be located.

Comprehensive health evaluations were conducted on 65 translocated tortoises in the fall of 2009 (October 7 to October 27). Blood plasma and nasal lavage samples were also collected from each of these 65 tortoises. Eight of these blood samples were a blood/lymph mixture, with at least 95% of the sample composed of blood; one sample (from 4499F) was a blood/lymph mixture with 50% of the sample composed of blood; the remaining samples were composed of 100% blood. As of the fall of 2009, 69 tortoises had been found dead or salvaged for necropsy, 20 were unable to be located, and four were unable to be extracted from their cover sites for health evaluations.

Tests for Mycoplasmosis

In the spring of 2009, four (4.9%) of 81 tortoises had positive or suspect ELISA tests for *Mycoplasma agassizii* (Table 1). Three tortoises had suspect tests and one tortoise had a positive ELISA test for *M. agassizii*. Of the four tortoises with positive or suspect ELISA tests for *M. agassizii*, two were located on plot 8, one was on plot 1.5, and one was on plot 3 (Fig. 2). Additionally, two tortoises (2.5%) had positive or suspect ELISA tests for *M. testudineum*. One tortoise had a positive test and the other a suspect ELISA test for *M. testudineum*; both were located on plot 1.5 (Fig. 3). Of the 81 nasal lavage samples collected in the spring, all cultures were negative for both *M. agassizii* and *M. testudineum*.

In the fall of 2009, six (9.2%) of 65 tortoises tested for *M. agassizii* had positive or suspect ELISA tests (Table 1). Three tortoises had positive tests and three tortoises

had suspect ELISA tests for *M. agassizii*. All six tortoises were located on plots 1.5 or 8 (Fig. 4). Five of these tortoises had previous positive or suspect tests for mycoplasmosis (Table 1). All 65 tortoises tested for *M. testudineum* in the fall had negative ELISA tests (Fig. 5). Two tortoises (4024M and 4257F) which had previously tested positive and suspect, respectively, for *M. testudineum* in spring, were not available to be tested because they had been killed by predators. Results are not yet available for cultures from the 65 nasal lavage samples.

Weight

There was a significant effect of season on measured weight ($F_{3,189} = 132.0, p < 0.001$). The post-hoc test revealed weight was greatest in spring 2008 just after translocation, fell in fall 2008, increased back to initial levels in spring 2009, and fell again in fall 2009 (Fig. 6). Weight was not significantly different among the two spring seasons ($p = 0.964$), however it was significantly lower in fall 2009 compared to fall 2008 ($p = 0.001$).

Movements and Fidelity to Cover Sites

Summary statistics for dispersal distance and minimum total distance are reported in Table 2. The tortoise which has moved the most, 4143M translocated to plot 8, has been located on multiple dates just outside the Ft. Irwin boundary fence in the SEA, 12.6 km from its initial release location, and has moved a total distance of at least 18.8 km since its release. Overall, males have dispersed further from their release locations compared to females (means = 3256.4 m for males, 1517.9 m for females; $F_{1,66} = 12.3, p = 0.001$). Males also had greater total distances moved compared to females (means = 6858.4 m for males, 3492.0 m for females; $F_{1,66} = 23.9, p < 0.001$). Although the total distances that remaining live tortoises moved was greater on plots 5 (mean = 7403.3 m) and 3 (6020.8 m) compared to plots 1.5 (4899.8 m) and 8 (4778.4 m), these differences were not statistically significant ($F_{3,64} = 1.5, p = 0.224$). Similarly, dispersal distance did not vary among translocation plots ($F_{3,64} = 1.1, p = 0.351$).

The minimum total distance moved in 2009 (mean = 1854 m) was significantly less than that in 2008 (mean = 3222 m; $t_{67} = 4.837, p < 0.001$). Regarding use of cover sites, five of 68 (7.4%) tortoises have used the same cover site every season (summer and winter of 2008 and summer and winter of 2009), and an additional 36 (52.9%) tortoises have used the same cover site in at least two of these seasons. In contrast, 27 (39.7%) of 68 tortoises had minimal fidelity to sites and used a different cover site for each season examined. Females were more likely to use the same cover sites than males (Fisher's exact test, $p < 0.001$); 22 of 38 males used different cover sites for each season compared to just 5 of 30 females.

Eighteen tortoises still remain within the boundaries of their initial release plots. On plot 1.5, six tortoises still remain on the plot, compared to two on plot 3, one on plot 5, and nine on plot 8 (Table 3). However, when considering the total number of tortoises alive at each translocation site, the proportion of tortoises on plot to those off plot is not

significantly different among translocation plots (Fisher's exact test, $p = 0.801$). Additionally, the number of females remaining on the plots does not differ from the number of males (Fisher's exact test, $p = 1.00$).

There has been marked seasonal variation in movement. Tortoises moved the greatest distances in the spring months immediately following translocation (Fig. 7). Tortoises travelled large distances in the spring of 2009 and, to a lesser extent, in the fall seasons of 2008 and 2009. Tortoises were least active during summer and winter months. The distances moved in 2009 were noticeably less than those in 2008 for both the spring and fall seasons, respectively (Fig. 7). Corroborative with the previous analyses, in general males moved more than females in each month.

Mortality

As of December 2009, 70 (44.3%) of the initial 158 tortoises had been found dead (68) or had been salvaged for necropsy (2). For 2009, the death rate of the 115 remaining tortoises (27 of 115), was similar (23.5%) but slightly lower than that of 2008, the year in which tortoises were first translocated (43 of 158, 27.2%). In 2009, 24 tortoises were probably killed by coyotes or other canids, and the causes of death were unable to be conclusively determined for three tortoises (Table 4). One of these tortoises, 4644F, had been missing for six months before its remains were located. When located, the carcass was crushed, the head and limbs were still remaining and intact, and there were no obvious signs of scavenging or predation (tooth marks, gnashes, tears). A relatively well-used, Bureau of Land Management-designated dirt road was approximately 300 m from where the carcass was located. The most likely cause of death, based on the condition of remains, was crushing by a vehicle. The tortoise was probably transported to the site by a person to conceal the death. The other two tortoises, 4548F and 4441M, were found dead in the open, with no evidence of predation; the head and limbs were still intact. Both tortoises moved large distances during the summer months prior to their deaths, and the expenditures of energy may have contributed to the causes of death.

Combining data for both sexes and both years, death rates varied significantly among translocation plots (Fisher's exact test, $p < 0.001$); 12 of the tortoises that died were located on plot 1.5, 24 were located on plot 3, 26 were located on plot 5, and eight were located on plot 8. More dead tortoises were females (42) than males (28), but the difference was not statistically significant (Fisher's exact test, $p = 0.126$). Death rates did not differ among health categories (i.e. groups to which tortoises were assigned prior to translocation; Fisher's exact test, $p = 0.7918$); 21 tortoises with clinical signs of shell disease died, followed by 17 tortoises with clinical signs of trauma, 16 healthy tortoises, and 16 tortoises with clinical signs of URTD. The size of a tortoise was not related to risk of death, as the average carapace length of tortoises that died did not differ from those still alive ($F_{1,137} = 1.719$, $p = 0.192$). However, tortoises that died in 2009 were larger than those that died in 2008 (mean MCL \pm SE = 246.5 ± 4.7 mm vs. 231.7 ± 3.7 ; $F_{1,68} = 6.05$, $p = 0.016$). Males were driving the statistical difference between years. Males dying in 2009 were significantly larger than those dying in 2008 (MCL = 262.5 ± 7.5 mm vs. 226.3 ± 8.1 mm; $F_{1,26} = 10.67$, $p = 0.003$), whereas sizes of females were not

significantly different between years (MCL = 226.5 ± 4.5 mm in 2009 vs. 234.0 ± 2.8 mm in 2008; $F_{1,40} = 1.98$, $p = 0.167$).

For data from 2009 alone, there was a significant effect of translocation plot on death rates (Fisher's exact test, $p = 0.005$; see Table 4), with again the highest rates on plots 3 and 5. Seven of the remaining 32 tortoises on plot 1.5 died in 2009, compared to six of the remaining 16 on plot 3, ten of the remaining 15 on plot 5, and four of the remaining 31 on plot 8. In 2009 alone, there was no difference in death rates among the sexes (Fisher's exact test, $p = 0.501$); 11 of the remaining 45 females died compared to 16 of the 51 remaining males.

Three of the 43 tortoises found dead in 2008 (4014F, 4720F, 4011F) previously had suspect ELISA tests for mycoplasmosis. In 2009, eleven of the 27 tortoises found dead had previous positive or suspect tests for *M. testudineum* (2533M positive in spring 2009; 4024M suspect in spring 2009; 4136F, 2023M, 2557F, 4179F, 4644F, 4085F, 4106M, 4361M, and 4442M suspect in fall 2008). Several of these tortoises had suspect ELISA tests for *M. testudineum* from fall 2008, a season with an unexpectedly high number of suspect tests for this species (Berry et al. 2009).

Of the initial 158 translocated tortoises, 20 tortoises (17.4%, 20/115) were unable to be located in December 2009 and are considered missing. Of the 20 currently missing tortoises, six had their radiotransmitters detached by a predator or otherwise, and the radiotransmitter signals of the remaining 14 are inaudible at previously known locations. As of December 2009, the locations of 68 live tortoises were known. The sex ratio of these tortoises (32 females and 36 males) is not significantly different than the sex ratio in December 2008 ($X^2 = 0.05$, $df = 1$, $p = 0.82$).

DISCUSSION

The results for the second year of the SEA translocation project reveal that the death rate of translocated tortoises is still high. In January 2009, 115 tortoises were known to be alive or missing. By the end of 2009, 23.5% of the tortoises had died and an additional 17.4% either remained missing or were newly missing. Overall, in December 2009, 40.9% had either been found dead or were still missing. Combining the data from 2008 and 2009, from the time of initial translocation of 158 tortoises in March-April of 2008, 70 (44.3%) tortoises have died and an additional 20 (12.7%) are missing.

As in the first year, predation by coyote continues to be the primary cause of deaths (Table 4). Overall, death rates were highest in the months immediately following translocation in 2008 and in the spring and fall of 2009 (Fig. 8). These time frames correspond to when tortoises were active and spending more time above-ground (i.e., just after translocation to a novel location, foraging in spring, and seeking mating opportunities in late summer/fall; see Fig. 7). Correspondingly, death rates were lowest in the winter of 2008 and summer of 2009 when tortoises spent more time in well-developed cover sites. While death rates were higher among females and smaller tortoises in 2008 (Berry et al. 2009), this was not the case in 2009. There is an apparent

trend that predation was initially highest among small females, but now larger males are also targets of predation (Fig. 9). This pattern may be an artifact of fewer females on the study plots after the initial wave of predation, or it may signify that coyotes have increased their abilities to successfully prey upon the larger male tortoises.

Disease may be an important factor in predation. A substantial portion of the tortoises that died in 2009 (40.7%) had previously tested positive or suspect for mycoplasmosis after being translocated. This figure includes all tortoises in the project, regardless of health group. We need to conduct further research and analysis on effects of health and disease on survival.

Between 2008 and 2009, the proportion of tortoises with suspect or positive ELISA tests increased for *M. agassizii* but decreased for *M. testudineum*. In the spring and fall of 2009, 4.9% and 9.2% of tortoises had positive or suspect ELISA tests for *M. agassizii*. These proportions of ELISA suspect and positive tortoises for *M. agassizii* are higher than in 2008 (Berry et al. 2009) and higher than reported for 669 tortoises sampled in and around the SEA in 2007 (Berry and Mack 2008). Similar to findings in 2008 (Berry et al. 2009), tortoises with positive or suspect tests for *M. agassizii* are concentrated on or near plots 1.5 and 8 (Figs. 2 and 4). Three individuals had multiple positive or suspect tests for *M. agassizii* during 2008 and 2009 (Table 1).

In the spring of 2009, two tortoises (2.5%) had positive or suspect ELISA tests for *M. testudineum*. These two tortoises were killed by predators during summer and thus could not be sampled in fall. All remaining tortoises had negative tests for *M. testudineum* in the fall. While the proportion of tortoises with positive or suspect tests in spring of 2008 and 2009 are similar, there is a notable discrepancy when comparing rates from the fall seasons of the same years, 31.5% in 2008 vs. 0% in 2009 (Berry et al. 2009). Shifts from positive or suspect ELISA tests for *M. testudineum* to negative status may be due to the quality of blood samples and dilution with lymph, the virulence of *Mycoplasma* spp., timing of sampling in fall, variations in the tests, or other factors.

Weight can be an important indicator of overall health (Henen et al. 1998; Christopher et al. 1999, 2003; Berry et al. 2002). Weight may reflect hydration status, expenditures of energy, availability of food and water, ability of a tortoise to find food and water, and health status. The seasonal differences in weight between spring, summer, and fall observed in the SEA tortoises are comparable to previous studies of desert tortoise populations; weight is generally higher in the spring than in fall (Christopher et al. 1999). However, the decrease in weight between the 2008 and 2009 fall seasons is of concern, and weight should continue to be monitored in conjunction with health assessments or more frequently.

The data on movement patterns of translocated tortoises will be useful for determining the appropriate size for future translocation release sites, the effects of translocation on behavior, and potentially, the effects of habitat type and quality on behavior. Our preliminary results show that translocated tortoises may disperse up to 13 km from their release location within the first two years. Therefore future managers and

scientists responsible for designing and managing translocations should consider translocation sites with a buffer zone of suitable habitat at least this large in each direction. Additionally, only 18 of the initial 158 tortoises have not dispersed from the one square mile release plots, indicating the need for translocation sites with much larger areas of quality habitat. In some regards, the translocated tortoises in this study have exhibited movement patterns similar to those reported in previous studies. Differences exist between sexes, with males moving more than females (Berry 1986, O'Connor et al. 1994), and differences exist between seasons, with higher activity levels in the spring and fall compared to the summer and winter when temperature extremes and/or lack of water limit above ground activity (see Fig. 7; Henen 1997, Henen et al. 1998, Nagy and Medica 1986). Tortoises moved less in 2009 compared to 2008, the year in which tortoises were first translocated, and some tortoises have repeatedly used the same cover sites. These results suggest that some translocated tortoises have begun to “settle” into the new sites and may be establishing home ranges, a first step in assimilating with the resident population. Also of note is that movements were greater (statistically in 2008 [Berry et al. 2009], but not for both years combined) on plots 3 and 5 compared to plots 1.5 and 8. Plots 3 and 5 also had higher death rates, and the possible relationship between increased movement and risk of mortality deserves further attention.

Continued work on this project will be directed at addressing the previously stated objectives. Health, including prevalence of mycoplasmosis and other diseases, weight, and general condition, of translocated tortoises will continue to be monitored at regular intervals by incorporating clinical signs of disease recorded during health evaluations with ELSIA test results. Signs of trauma and shell disease, along with signs of URTD, will be analyzed to determine the effects of translocation and anthropogenic impacts on these variables and whether or not incidences of disease and trauma have increased since translocation. The survival and movement patterns of translocated tortoises will continue to be monitored to assess the success of translocation. Finally, habitat characteristics, including topography, foraging and cover site availability, and levels of anthropogenic impacts, will be compared between initial capture sites and translocation release sites as well as among the four translocation plots.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. This report does not contain a complete analysis of all health data for the translocated tortoises, between the time of translocation and December 2009, e.g., the analysis of changes in clinical signs between seasons and years. This analysis will be conducted as time permits.
2. The abnormally high death rates that began shortly after the initial translocation in March and April of 2008 have continued, and have again risen to high levels in the fall of 2009. The high death rates are primarily the result of canid (coyote) predation. The result has been loss of a significant portion of the sample population. Scientists have reported high death rates of tortoises from predators in other Ft. Irwin studies and in other research projects in California and Nevada during the last few years, and have summarized findings in a draft manuscript for the open literature (Esque et al.,

unpublished paper). Little or no action has been taken (depending on the site) by managing agencies to mitigate the impact to tortoise populations. In our study, which is in critical habitat, we designed the health and disease project to provide valuable information for recovery efforts and to mitigate some impacts of the translocation. Unfortunately, the high death rates have compromised the quality and quantity of data, as well as our ability to achieve many of the initial research objectives. Many elements of the research project will need to be repeated in future translocation efforts using a more robust sample if we are to achieve our initial goals.

3. Based on the unpublished manuscript by Esque et al. on predation, the high death rate from translocatees appears to be influenced by proximity to urban/rural areas and topographical features. There may be other local factors that contribute to elevated populations of coyotes and other predators of tortoises, including proximity to old agricultural fields, roads, trails, and recreation. The younger and smaller subadult and adult tortoises are probably more vulnerable than larger, older tortoises. We need to explore and analyze any and all factors that may affect predation of tortoises and the success of the future translocation of tortoises from the Western Expansion Area to the Western Expansion Translocation Area prior to moving tortoises.

4. Based on unexplained deaths of two tortoises during 2009 (4548F in September 2009, 4441M in August 2009), we may need to increase the health sampling of tortoises from twice per year to three or four times per year or once per season. Additional sampling may be limited to weighing the tortoises and conducting an abbreviated health evaluation (no drawing of blood or taking a nasal lavage).

5. The ELISA test for *M. testudineum* needs to be validated for *G. agassizii*. (This recommendation is repeated from Berry et al. [2009]). This research project is a very high priority, is essential to resolving questions about translocation, and should be undertaken with appropriate financial support as soon as possible. Until the test is validated, we will have continuing questions about the test and cut-off points for suspect and positive titers. We will be able to make better decisions about translocatees if the validation research has been completed.

6. Quality of Habitat (a recommendation repeated from Berry et al. [2009]). The quality of habitat where translocated tortoises were placed is a topic that needs to be addressed as soon as possible. Were the locations appropriate and if not, why not? As we can see from our data, death rates were highest on plots 3 and 5 and movements of tortoises from their original release points were highest on plot 3 and lower on plots 1.5. The soils, surficial geology, vegetative cover and composition of shrubs, elevation, and potential food sources should be evaluated retrospectively for each release site and for the original home sites as soon as possible to reveal critical factors essential to improving the chances for successful translocations. We plan to initiate such a study in 2010.

Acknowledgements. Dr. Mary Brown and Dr. Lori Wendland of the University of Florida are collaborators on this project. They provided valuable advice on interpretations and will be co-authors on any future publications for the open literature. Dr. Elliott Jacobson, also of

the University of Florida at Gainesville, is the pathologist. For tracking, monitoring, and conducting health evaluations of tortoises, we thank Marcella Waggoner, Jeremy Mack, Nate Newman, Kemp Anderson, Rafe McGuire, Sally Boisvert, Tim Hockin, Jessica Kayser, Cynthia Furman, Kevin Walsh, Tonya Rasmussen, Sara Hanner, Al DeMartini, John Boswell, Kevin Lucas, Aaron Keller, Irene Alexakos, Ben Kirkpatrick, Chris Hatton, and John Hillman. Kristina Drake coordinated fieldwork with USGS scientists at the Las Vegas Field Station. Thanks are due to K. Phillips for review and to C. Everly for advice. The National Training Center, Ft. Irwin, provided financial support.

REFERENCES

- Berry, K.H. 1986. Desert Tortoise (*Gopherus agassizii*) Relocation: Implications of social behavior and movements. *Herpetologica* 42(1):113-125.
- Berry, K.H. 2006. Progress Report for 2005. The Health Status of Resident Desert Tortoises (*Gopherus agassizii*) in the Fort Irwin Translocation Area, San Bernardino County, California. U.S. Geological Survey, Western Ecological Research Center, Moreno Valley, California. Final Report to National Training Center and Ft. Irwin, California. 15pp with appendices.
- Berry, K.H. and M.M. Christopher. 2001. Guidelines for the field evaluation of desert tortoise health and disease. *Journal of Wildlife Diseases* 37(3): 427-450.
- Berry, K.H., and J. Mack. 2008. Progress Report for 2007. The Health Status of Resident Desert Tortoises (*Gopherus agassizii*) in the Fort Irwin Translocation Area, San Bernardino County, California. U.S. Geological Survey, Western Ecological Research Center, Moreno Valley, California. Final Report to National Training Center and Ft. Irwin, California.
- Berry, K.H., E. K. Spangenberg, B. L. Homer, and E.R. Jacobson. 2002. Deaths of desert tortoises following periods of drought and research manipulation. *Chelonian Conservation and Biology* 4:436-448.
- Berry, K.H., L.D. Wendland, A. Demmon, and M.B. Brown. 2005. A comparison of lymph and plasma sample results from ELISA tests for *Mycoplasma agassizii* in desert tortoises. Presentation and Abstract from the 30th Annual Desert Tortoise Council Symposium, held in Tucson, Arizona. February 2005.
- Berry, K.H., A. Demmon, T. Bailey, and J. Mack. 2006. Protocols for drawing blood from the brachial plexus and subcarapacial site of desert tortoises: Instructions for Ordering Equipment and Culture Media; Summary of How to Draw Blood and Information on How to Contract for Laboratory Analysis and Shipping Laboratory Samples. Appendix on New Technique for Conducting Nasal Lavages by L. Wendland. U.S. Geological Survey, Moreno Valley, CA. 14 p.
- Berry, K.H., T.A. Gowan, and J.S. Mack. 2009. Progress Report for 2008. The health status, survival, and movements of 158 translocated Desert Tortoises (*Gopherus*

- agassizii*) in the Southern Expansion Area of the Fort Irwin Translocation Area, San Bernardino County, California: Year 1. U. S. Geological Survey, Moreno Valley, CA. Final Report to National Training Center and Ft. Irwin, California.
- Brown, M.B., I.M. Schumacher, P.A. Klein, K. Harris, T. Correll, and E.R. Jacobson. 1994. *Mycoplasma agassizii* causes upper respiratory tract disease in the desert tortoise. *Infection and Immunity* 62(10):4580-4586.
- Brown, M.B., K.H. Berry, I.M. Schumacher, K.A. Nagy, M.M. Christopher, and P.A. Klein. 1999. Seroepidemiology of upper respiratory tract disease in the desert tortoise in the western Mojave Desert of California. *Journal of Wildlife Diseases* 35(4):716-727.
- Brown, D.R., I.M. Schumacher, G.S. McLaughlin, L.D. Wendland, M.B. Brown, P.A. Klein, and E. R. Jacobson. 2002. Application of diagnostic tests for mycoplasmal infections of desert and gopher tortoises, with management recommendations. *Chelonian Conservation Biology* 4(2):497-507.
- Brown, D.R., J.L. Merritt, E. R. Jacobson, P.A. Klein, J.G. Tully, and M.B. Brown. 2004. *Mycoplasma testudineum* sp. nov., from a desert tortoise (*Gopherus agassizii*) with upper respiratory tract disease. *International Journal of Systematic and Evolutionary Microbiology* 45(5):1527-1529.
- Christopher, M.M., K.H. Berry, I.R. Wallis, K.A. Nagy, B.T. Henen, and C.C. Peterson. 1999. Reference intervals and physiologic alterations in hematologic and biochemical values of free-ranging desert tortoises in the Mojave Desert. *Journal of Wildlife Diseases* 35:212-238.
- Christopher, M.M., K.H. Berry, B.T. Henen, and K.A. Nagy. 2003. Clinical disease and laboratory abnormalities in free-ranging desert tortoises in California (1990-1995). *Journal of Wildlife Diseases* 39:35-56.
- Esque, T.C., K.E. Nussear, and P.A. Medica. 2005. Desert tortoise translocation plan for Fort Irwin's Land Expansion Program at the U.S. Army National Training Center (NTC) & Fort Irwin. U.S. Geological Survey, Henderson, Nevada. 24 June 2005.
- Gottdenker, N.L., and E.R. Jacobson. 1995. Effect of venipuncture sites on hematologic and clinical biochemical values in desert tortoises (*Gopherus agassizii*). *American Journal of Veterinary Research* 56(1):19-21.
- Henen, B.T. 1997. Seasonal and annual energy budgets of female desert tortoises (*Gopherus agassizii*). *Ecology* 78(1):283-296.

- Henen, B.T., C.C. Peterson, I.R. Wallis, K.H. Berry, and K.A. Nagy. 1998. Effects of climate variation on field metabolism and water relations of desert tortoises. *Oecologia* 117:365-373.
- Hernandez-Divers, S.M., S.J. Hernandez-Divers, and J. Wyneken. 2002. Angiographic, anatomic and clinical technique descriptions of a subcarapacial venipuncture site for chelonians. *Journal of Herpetological Medicine and Surgery* 12(2):32-37.
- Homer, B.L., K.H. Berry M.B. Brown, G. Ellis, and E.R. Jacobson. 1998. Pathology of diseases in desert tortoises from California. *Journal of Wildlife Diseases* 34(3):508-523.
- Jacobson, E.R., J.M. Gaskin, M.B. Brown, R.K. Harris, C.H. Gardiner, J.L. LaPointe, H.P. Adams, and C. Reggiardo. 1991. Chronic upper respiratory tract disease of free-ranging desert tortoises (*Xerobates agassizii*). *Journal of Wildlife Diseases* 27:296-316.
- Nagy, K.A. and P.A. Medica. 1986. Physiological ecology of desert tortoises in Southern Nevada. *Herpetologica* 42(1):73-92.
- O'Connor, M.P., L.C. Zimmerman, D. E. Ruby, S.J. Bulova, and J.R. Spotila. 1994. Home range size and movements by desert tortoises, *Gopherus agassizii*, in the Eastern Mojave Desert. *Herpetological Monographs* 8:60-71.
- Schumacher, I.M., M.B. Brown, E.R. Jacobson, B.R. Collins, and P.A. Klein. 1993. Detection of antibodies to a pathogenic mycoplasma in desert tortoises (*Gopherus agassizii*) with upper respiratory tract disease. *Journal of Clinical Microbiology* 31:1454-1460.
- SYSTAT Software Inc. 2007. SYSTAT 12.0 Statistics. SYSTAT Software Inc., Richmond, California.
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 1990. Endangered and threatened wildlife and plants; determination of threatened status for the Mojave population of the desert tortoise. *Federal Register* 55(63):12178-12191.
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 1994. The Desert Tortoise (Mojave Population) Recovery Plan. U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Portland, Oregon. 73 pp and appendices.
- Wendland, L., L.A. Zacher, P.A. Klein, D.R. Brown, D. Demcovitz, R. Littell, and M.B. Brown. 2007. Improved Enzyme-Linked Immunosorbent Assay to reveal *Mycoplasma agassizii* exposure: A valuable tool in the management of environmentally sensitive tortoise populations. *Clinical and Vaccine Immunology* 14:1190-1195.

Table 1. Previous ELISA test results for desert tortoises with positive or suspect tests in 2009. Green cells represent negative status, orange cells represent suspect, and red cells represents positive.

ID	Sex	Plot	<i>M. agassizii</i>				<i>M. testudineum</i>			
			Sp08	Fa08	Sp09	Fa09	Sp08	Fa08	Sp09	Fa09
4410	M	8	Red	Red	Red	Red	Green	Orange	Green	Green
2040	M	8	Green	Red	Orange	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green
4166	F	1.5	Red	Orange	Orange	Orange	Green	Green	Green	Green
4423	F	3	Green	Green	Orange	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
2533	M	1.5	Green	Green	Green	N/A	Green	Green	Red	N/A
4024	M	1.5	Green	Green	Green	N/A	Green	Green	Orange	N/A
4257	F	1.5	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green
4300	M	1.5	Green	Green	Green	Orange	Green	Red	Green	Green
4611	F	8	Green	Green	Green	Orange	Green	Orange	Green	Green

Table 2. Summary statistics for movement variables of translocated desert tortoises from March 2008 through December 2009.

	Maximum (m)	Minimum (m)	Mean (m)	SD	N
Dispersal distance	12,567.3	275.2	2,438.3	2,203.6	68
Minimum total distance	18,814.4	1,070.7	5,274.2	3,280.7	68

Table 3. Counts of translocated desert tortoises that are still remaining (On Plot) or that have dispersed (Off Plot) from the boundaries of their initial release plots.

Plot	On Plot		Off Plot		Total
	M	F	M	F	
1.5	5	1	8	10	24
3	1	1	5	3	10
5	0	1	5	1	7
8	4	5	8	10	27

Table 4. Summary of translocated desert tortoises found dead in 2009.

ID	Sex	Plot	MCL	Date Located	Notes
2038	F	1.5	214	22-Sep-09	Likely predation by coyote
4136	F	1.5	201	20-Oct-09	Likely predation by coyote
4162	F	1.5	227	22-Sep-09	Likely predation by coyote
4554	F	1.5	211	4-May-09	Likely predation by canid
2533	M	1.5	260	13-Aug-09	Likely predation by coyote
4024	M	1.5	255	22-Sep-09	Likely predation by coyote
4060	M	1.5	275	22-Oct-09	Likely predation by coyote
2557	F	3	206	4-May-09	Likely predation by coyote
4179	F	3	240	24-Feb-09	Likely predation by coyote
2023	M	3	267	22-Apr-09	Likely predation by coyote
4158	M	3	266	22-Apr-09	Likely predation by coyote
4239	M	3	274	22-Apr-09	Likely predation by coyote
4640	M	3	263	4-May-09	Likely predation by coyote
2550	F	5	211	23-Sep-09	Likely predation by coyote
4288	F	5	229	18-Mar-09	Likely predation by coyote
4548	F	5	227	23-Sep-09	Cause of death unknown; no signs of predation
4556	F	5	280	21-Oct-09	Likely predation by coyote
4644	F	5	232	23-Apr-09	Crushed shell, probable vehicle kill
4073	M	5	262	14-Aug-09	Likely predation by coyote
4108	M	5	266	14-Apr-09	Likely predation by coyote
4129	M	5	284	23-Sep-09	Likely predation by coyote
4291	M	5	262	21-Oct-09	Likely predation by coyote
4442	M	5	273	08-Dec-09	Likely predation by coyote
4085	F	8	223	15-Apr-09	Likely predation by coyote
4106	M	8	265	16-Apr-09	Likely predation by coyote
4361	M	8	211	15-Apr-09	Likely predation by coyote
4441	M	8	246	18-Aug-09	Cause of death unknown; no signs of predation

Fig 1. Overview map of the Ft. Irwin Southern Expansion Area and translocation plots.

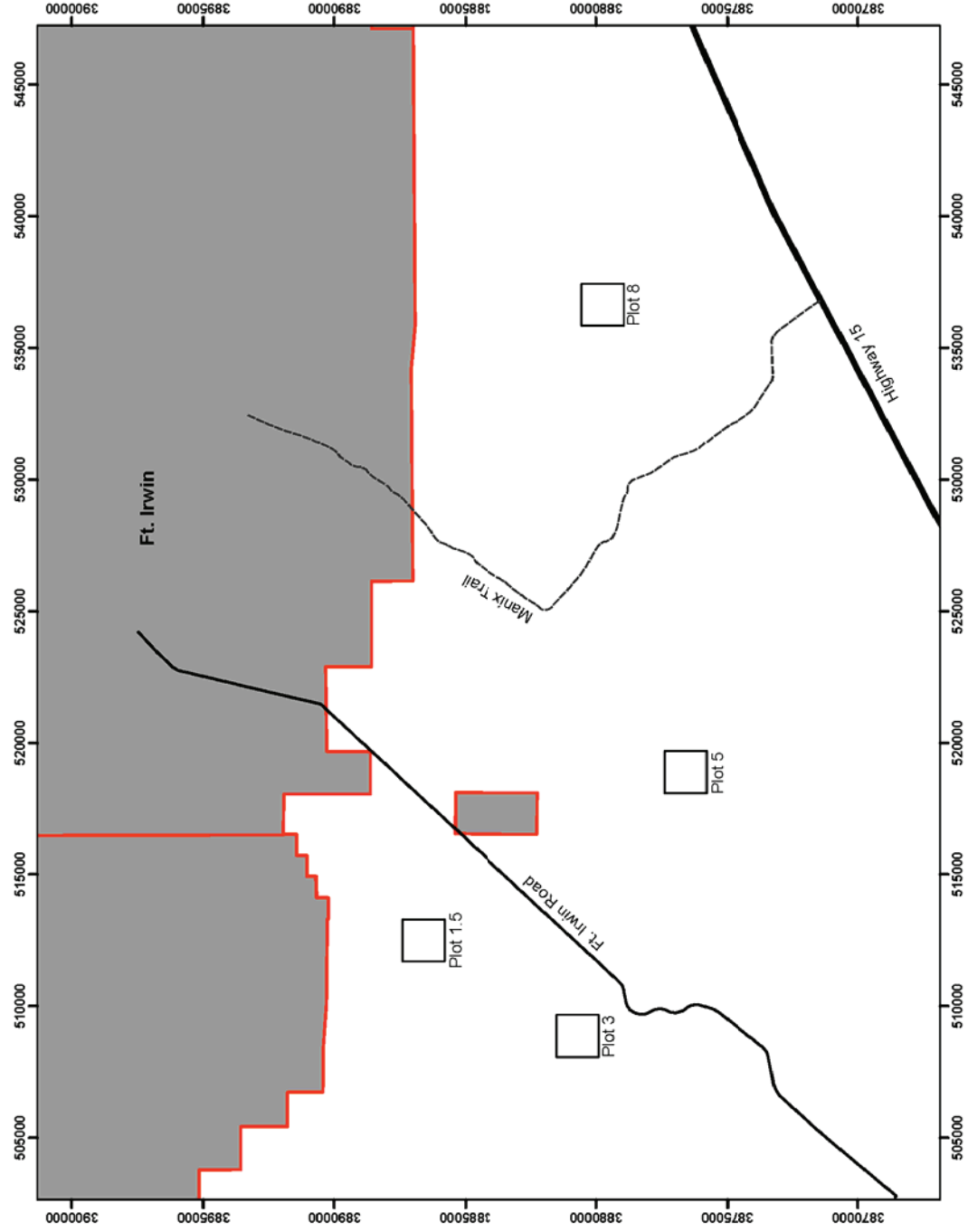


Fig 2. Results of ELISA tests for *Mycoplasma agassizii* from desert tortoises sampled in spring of 2009.

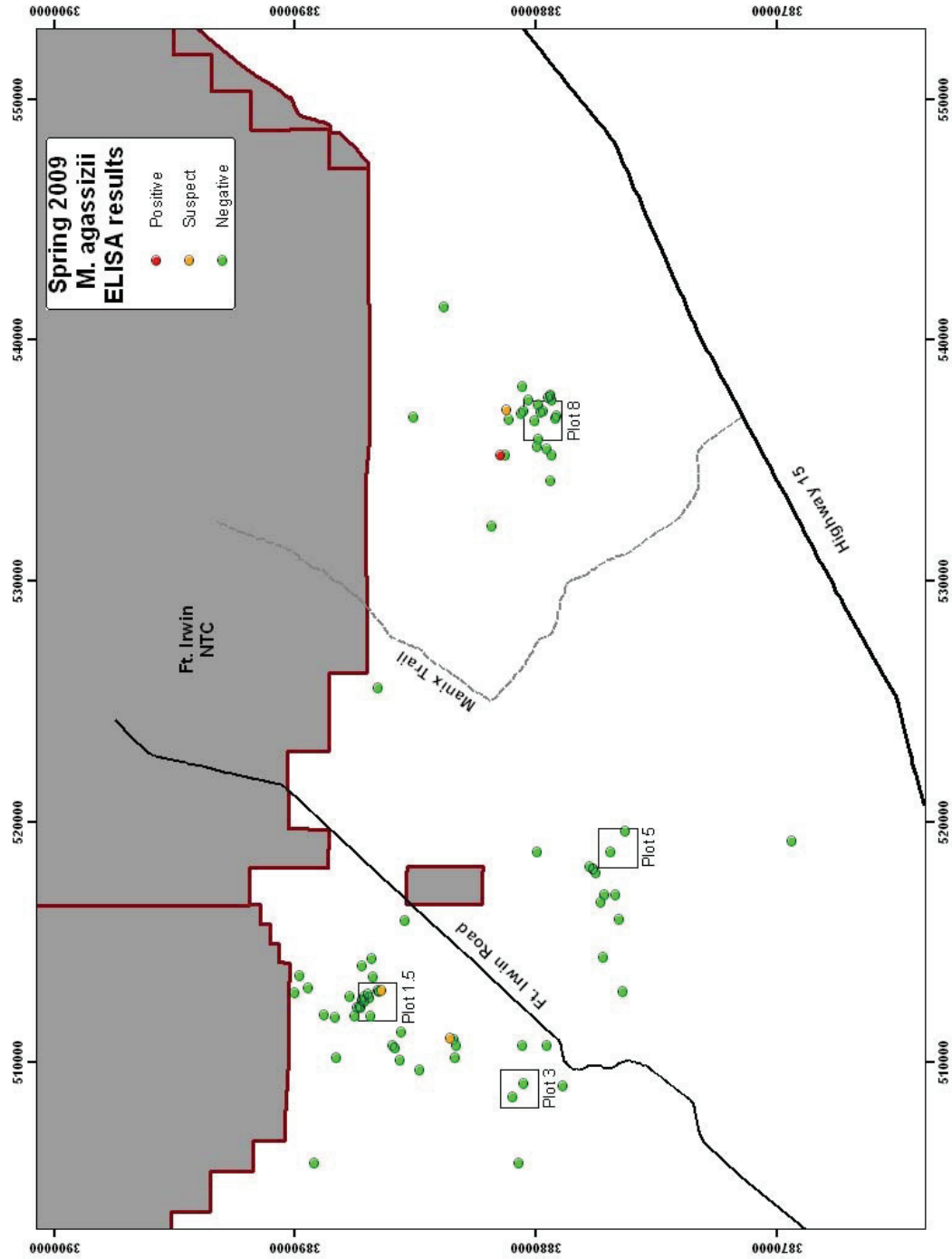


Fig 3. Results of ELISA tests for *Mycoplasma testudineum* from desert tortoises sampled in spring of 2009.

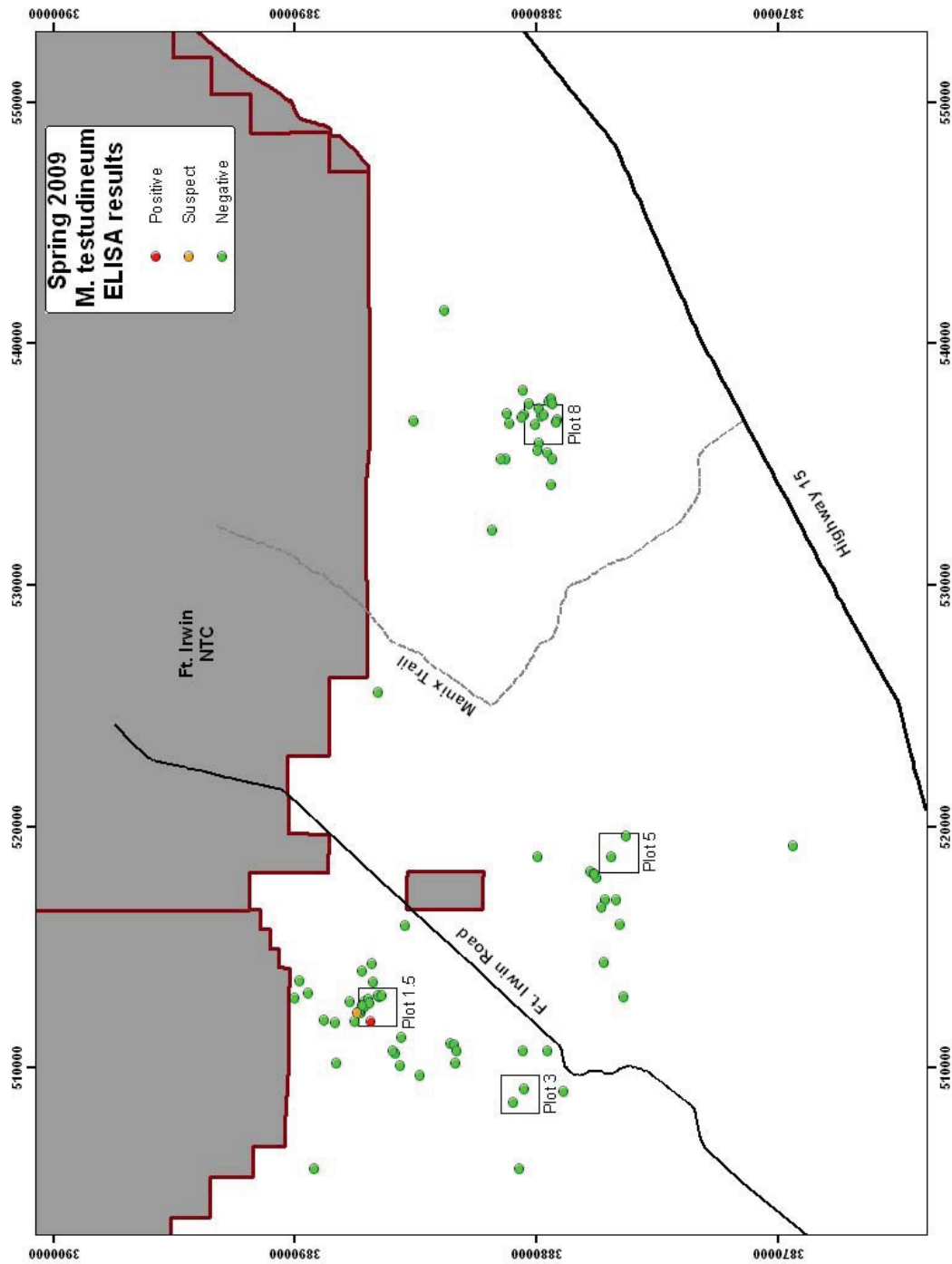


Fig 4. Results of ELISA tests for *Mycoplasma agassizii* from desert tortoises sampled in fall of 2009.

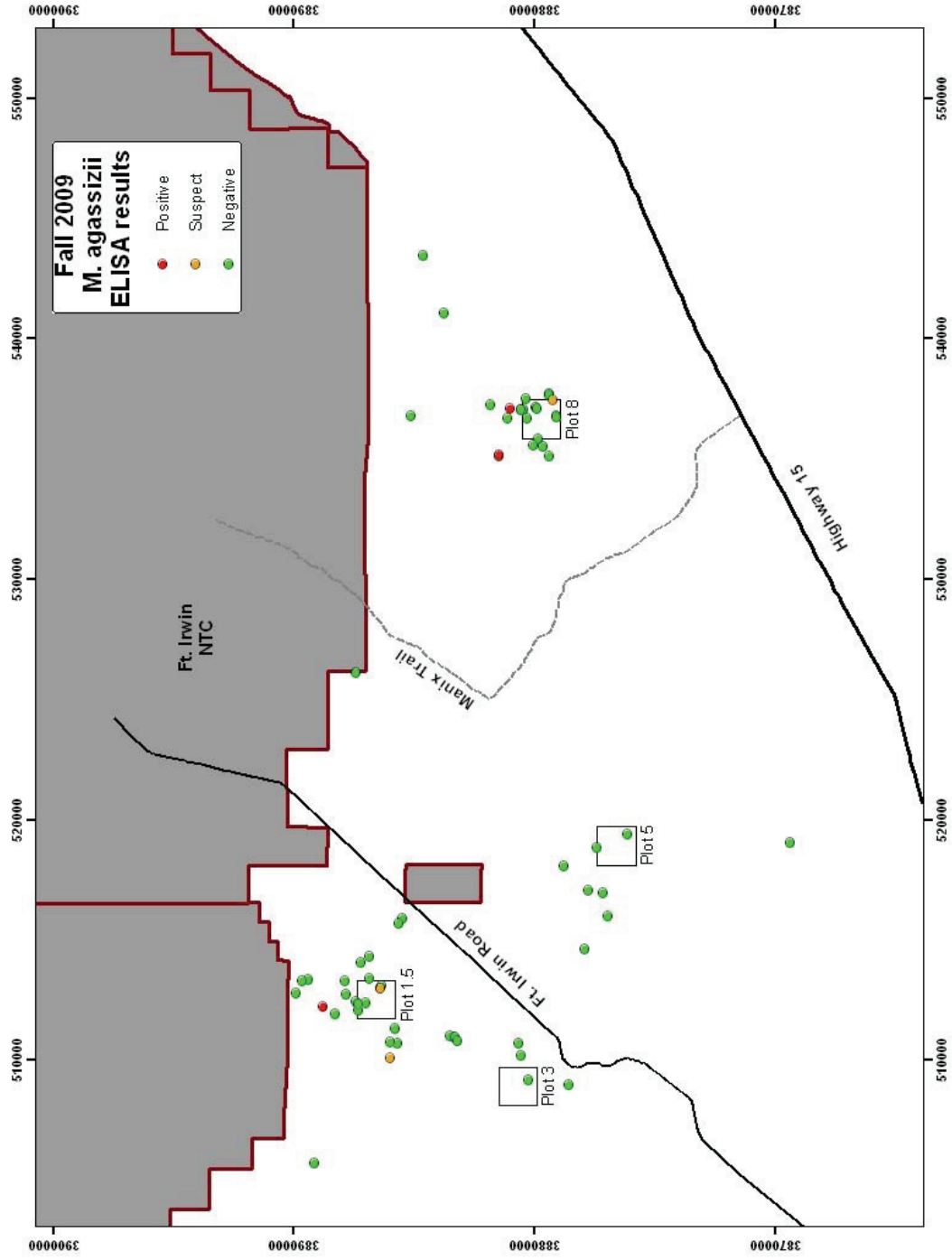


Fig 5. Results of ELISA tests for *Mycoplasma testudineum* from desert tortoises sampled in fall of 2009.

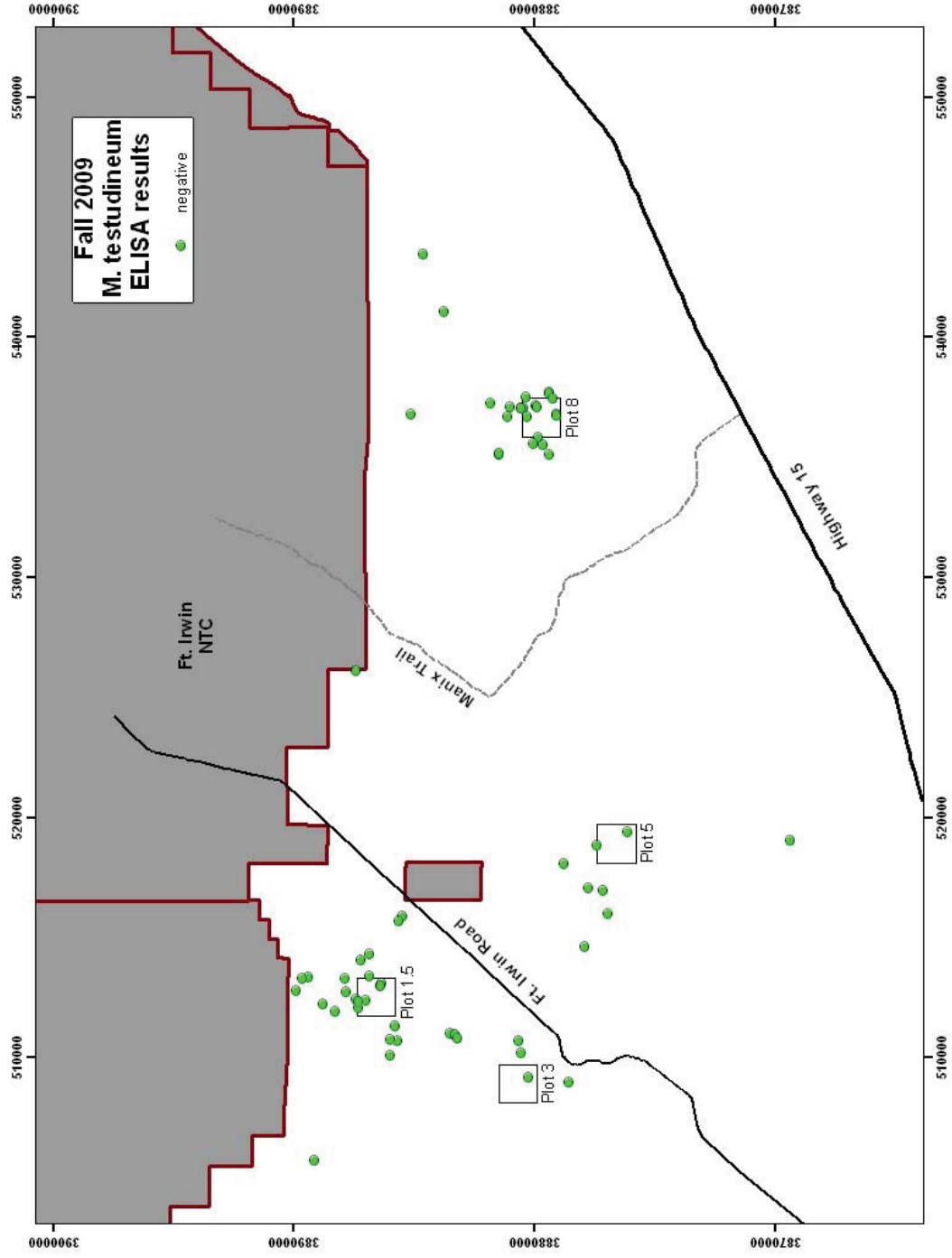


Fig 6. Mean (\pm SE) weight of desert tortoises (n=64) in four seasons post-translocation.

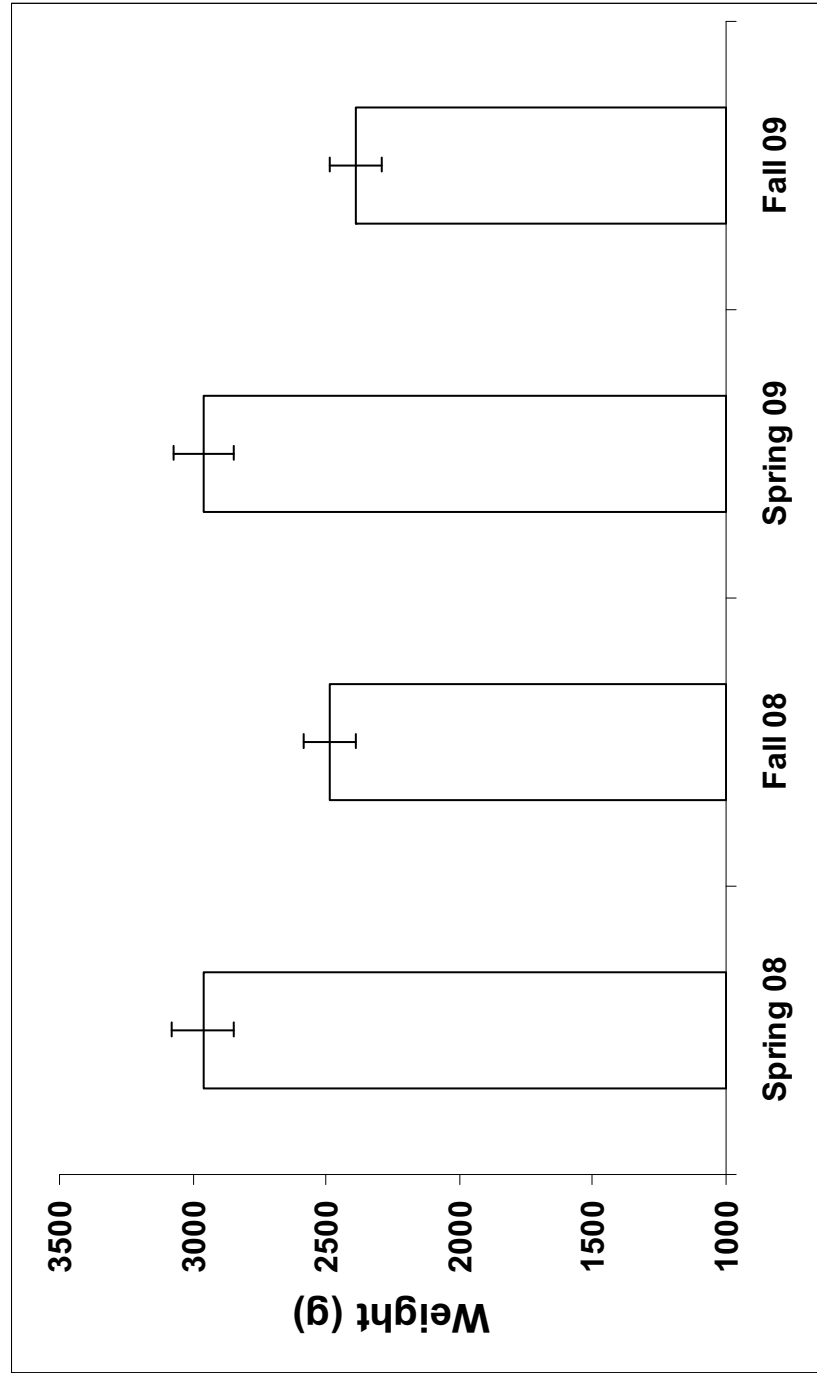


Fig 7. Mean (\pm SE) distances moved by desert tortoises for each month after translocation.

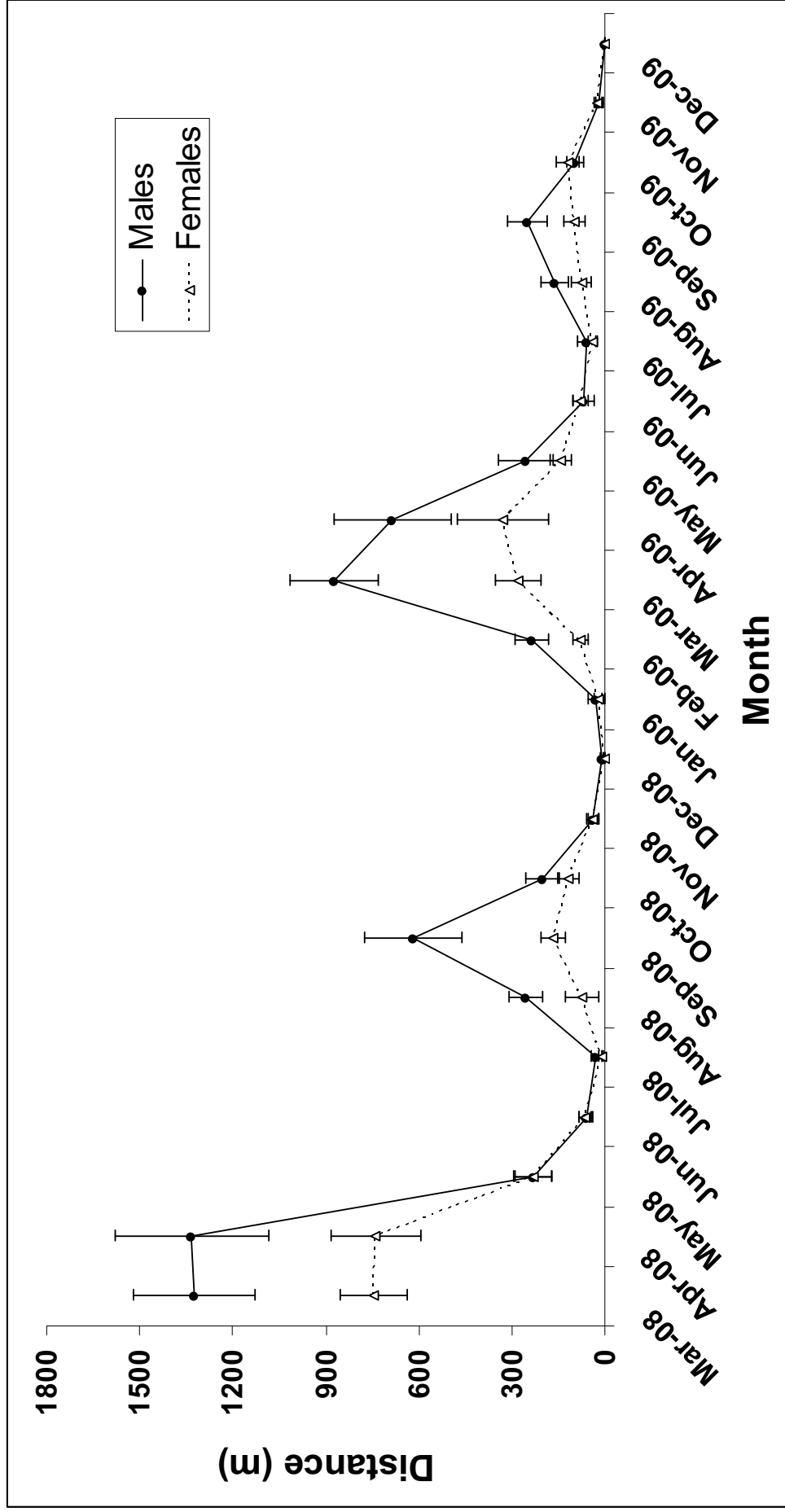


Fig 8. Percent of desert tortoises found dead (# dead/# remaining) by season for the first 20 months after translocation.

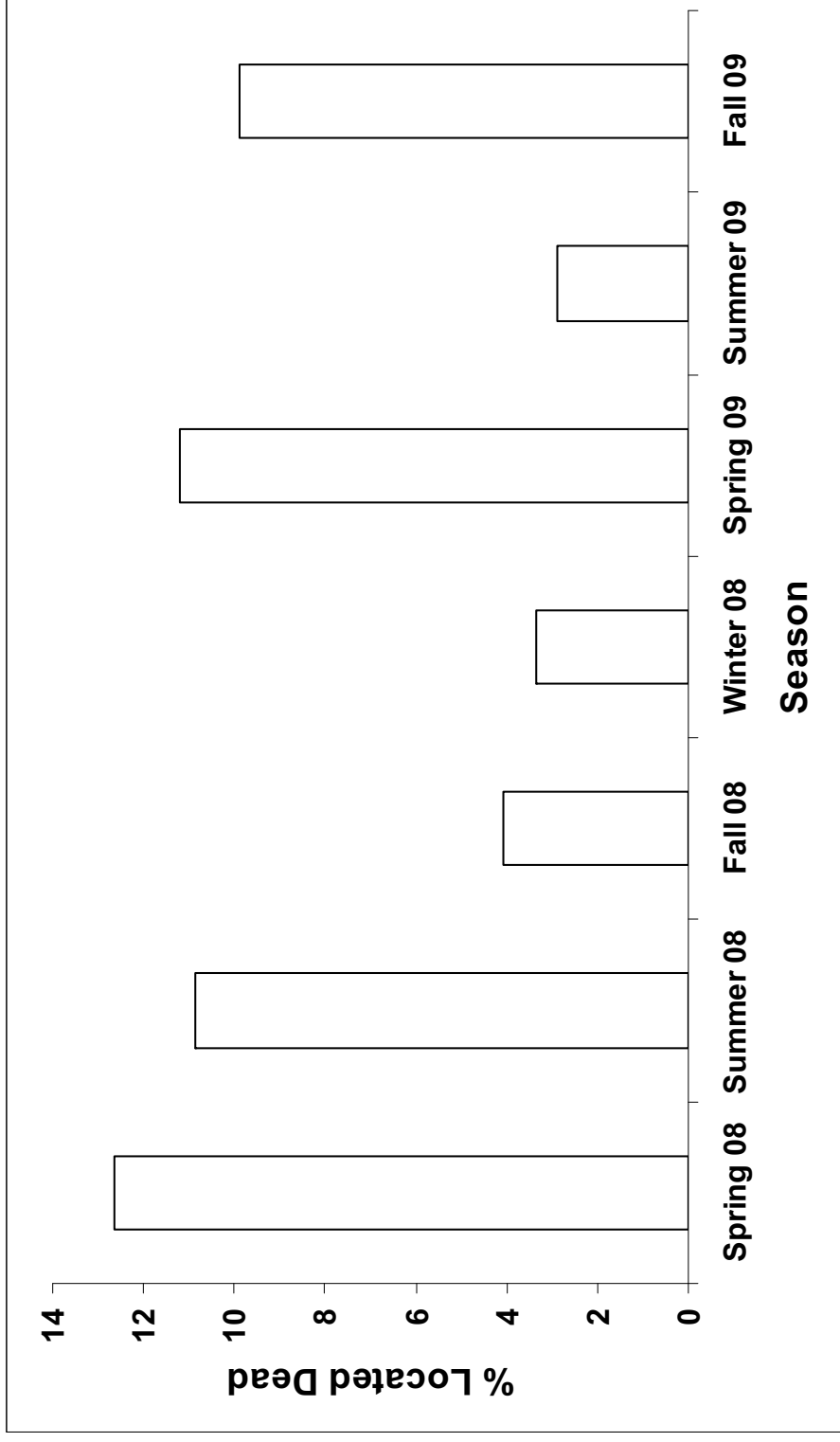
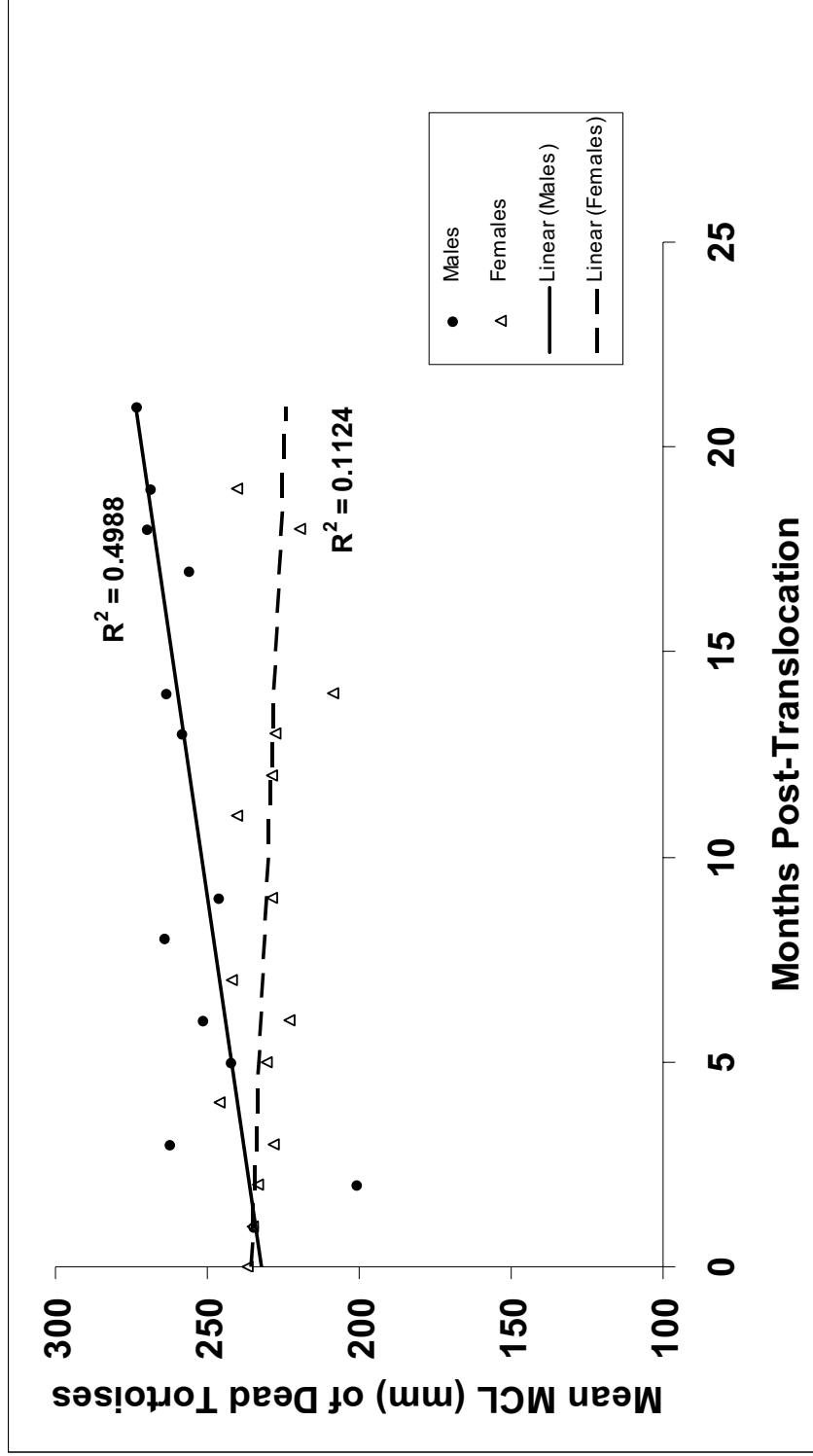


Fig 9. Mean MCL (carapace length at midline, mm) of desert tortoises located dead for each month after translocation. Note the increase in size of males found dead over time and the decrease in size of females.



PROGRESS REPORT FOR 2009

An Evaluation of Desert Tortoises (*Gopherus agassizii*)
and Their Habitats at 47 Sample Plots in the
Western Expansion Translocation Area,
Fort Irwin Translocation Project, San Bernardino
County, California

Kristin H. Berry, etc.
U. S. Geological Survey
Western Ecological Research Center
22835 Calle San Juan de Los Lagos
Moreno Valley, California 92553

for

Commander NTC & Fort Irwin
ATTN: AFZJ-PW-EV, Clarence Everly
P.O. Box 105097
Fort Irwin, CA 92310-5097

An Evaluation of Desert Tortoises (*Gopherus agassizii*) and Their Habitats at 47 Sample Plots in the Western Expansion Area, Fort Irwin Translocation Project, San Bernardino County, California

Abstract. The Ft. Irwin Translocation Project (FITP) for desert tortoises (*Gopherus agassizii*) is in the fifth year of a multi-year effort. During 2009, 48 plots were selected for surveys in the Western Expansion Translocation Area (WETA). The data are to be used to prepare a model which would identify potential release areas for tortoises to be translocated from the western expansion of Ft. Irwin. Of the 48 plots, three plots previously received preliminary or comprehensive surveys during fall of 2008. Surveys were not repeated on these plots in 2009 and the data are not included here.

Two types of surveys were conducted: (1) preliminary surveys of each plot to count signs of tortoises and common predators of tortoises and to evaluate habitat and anthropogenic impacts; and (2) comprehensive surveys to locate and evaluate each adult tortoise for health and disease on each plot. For the preliminary surveys, fieldworkers walked transects on 45 plots to collect data on tortoise and predator sign and to characterize vegetation, topography, surficial geology and anthropogenic impacts. Transects were 10 m wide by 5.3 km to 11.0 km in length, and each plot was 2.59 km². Counts of tortoise sign ranged from 0.0 to 4.1/km of transect with 12 plots having moderate to high counts (≥ 1.0 sign/km). Sign counts of tortoise predators ranged from 0.23/km to 7.97/km with higher counts on 8 plots (plots 1, 4, 5, 7, 8, 27, 34, and 35) than elsewhere.

Plots ranged in elevation from 604 to 1205 m. Dominant vegetation on 40 plots was creosote bush (*Larrea tridentata*) and burro bush (*Ambrosia dumosa*); salt bushes (*Atriplex* spp.) and other members in the Chenopodiaceae formed the dominant vegetation on five plots. Perennial vegetation in some disturbed areas was characterized by almost monotypic stands of salt bushes. The composition of shrubs in areas historically and recently grazed by livestock favored unpalatable species, such as Cooper's goldenbush (*Ericameria cooperi*), cheese bush (*Hymenoclea salsola*), and matchweed (*Gutierrezia* spp). The plots had a wide range of topographic features and surficial geology, from playas on valley floors to alluvial fans, rolling hills, rocky outcrops, badlands, and cliffs. Thirty-three plots had >80% of surface area and soils suitable for walking and digging. Parts of two plots were playas or old lakebeds and one plot had substantial volcanic fields. Parts of seven plots had one or more features of terrain and soils that were unsuitable for walking or digging (steep, rocky, or boulder-strewn slopes, cliffs, badlands).

Anthropogenic impacts were numerous and included trash and balloons; dirt roads; motorcycle trails and tracks left by cross-country travel of off-road vehicle users; areas denuded of vegetation; old structures and a shrine to off-road vehicle users; casings and targets from firearms; livestock scat and watering areas; and hazards in the form of mining shafts and pits, unexploded ordnance, and signs of domestic dogs. Several plots had hazards that present risks to tortoises. Plots with high counts of anthropogenic impacts were 7, 6, 2, 47, and 41.

Forty-seven plots received comprehensive surveys for live tortoises using 15-m wide transects. From 0 to 21 tortoises and from 0 to 87 shell-skeletal remains were found on each plot, for a grand total of 267 live tortoises and 1457 dead tortoises on the 47 plots. Of the 267 tortoises, 240 were available and of sufficient size for health evaluations. The sex ratio of adult tortoises was predominantly male. The 240 tortoises were evaluated for health and blood samples were drawn; 21 (8.75%) tortoises had positive or suspect ELISA tests for *Mycoplasma agassizii*; one tortoise with a positive ELISA test for *M. agassizii* also had a positive ELISA test for *M. testudineum*.

INTRODUCTION

The Ft. Irwin Translocation Project (FITP) for desert tortoises (*Gopherus agassizii*) is in its fifth year of a multi-year effort. Tortoises were translocated from the National Training Center's Southern Expansion Area (SEA) into parts of the Superior-Cronese Desert Wildlife Management Area and critical habitat in spring of 2008 (e.g., Berry et al. 2009, Gowan and Berry 2010). Planning has been underway for several years to undertake a similar translocation of tortoises from Ft. Irwin's Western Expansion Area (WEA) into the Western Expansion Translocation Area (WETA). The plan for the translocation of the SEA tortoises (Esque et al. 2005) was amended for translocation of the WEA tortoises (Esque et al. 2009). In early 2009, Esque and others selected 48 plots for evaluation. Three of the 48 plots had received preliminary surveys and one had been comprehensively surveyed in the fall of 2008 (Berry 2009).

The U.S. Geological Survey's health team (led by PI Kristin Berry of the Box Springs Field Station) had the task of evaluating the 48 plots and the health of tortoises on the plots. During spring and fall of 2009, the health team focused on two objectives: (1) to evaluate the relative densities of tortoises and their sign, vegetation type, topography, surficial geology, and anthropogenic impacts; and (2) to determine the health and disease status of resident tortoises on the plots. The ultimate objective was to determine the suitability of the sites, or sites like these, for release of the translocated WEA tortoises.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Collection of Data

Todd Esque, Ken Nussear, Phil Medica, and Karla Drake (U.S. Geological Survey's office in Henderson, Nevada) provided the locations of the 48 1-mi² (2.59 km²) plots to sample (Figure 1, Appendix 1). We conducted two types of surveys: (1) preliminary surveys of each of the 48 plots to count signs of tortoises and common predators of tortoises and to evaluate habitat and anthropogenic impacts; and (2) a comprehensive search of the plots most likely to have tortoises for assessing health status. Three of the plots had received partial or complete surveys in fall of 2008, thus reducing the survey effort in 2009 to 45 plots to receive preliminary surveys and 47 plots to receive comprehensive surveys.

Preliminary Surveys of the 45 Plots

These surveys were conducted between May 5 and June 9 in spring and September 29 and November 15 in fall by three experienced field workers (primarily K. Anderson, also P. Kermoian, T. Hockin, and J. Hillman). They walked 10-m wide transects along the plot boundaries (west, north, east, south), except in cases where the habitat was unlikely to support tortoises (e.g., volcanic fields, steep and rough terrain). Where habitat appeared to be appropriate for supporting tortoises and was heterogeneous, and additional information was desired, fieldworkers walked additional, diagonal transects, i.e., from the northwest to southeast and southwest to northeast corners.

Data recorded for the preliminary surveys on tortoises included numbers of live tortoises (with estimated size/age), shells or shell-skeletal remains, active and inactive cover sites, scats, and other, miscellaneous sign (tracks, courtship rings, drinking depressions, etc.). Middens of wood rats were superficially examined for tortoise remains. Scats of tortoise predators, in particular coyotes (*Canis latrans*) and kit foxes (*Vulpes macrotis*) were checked for remains of tortoises. Locations of each live tortoise and remains of dead tortoises were noted but not extracted. Tortoise cover sites or shelters (burrows, caves, pallets, and rock shelters) were counted and each assigned a status based on activity. An active cover site was defined as currently having a tortoise, showing signs of recent use, or a tortoise could walk or plow into it and use it immediately. An active cover site also contained minimal plant debris or drifted sand. Inactive cover sites required some excavation by the tortoises, had signs of structural degradation at the corners of the burrow opening and at the mouth, or were collapsed or partially collapsed, requiring a major excavation effort for use.

Signs and presence of predators (individual predators or calls; numbers of scats, roost sites, dens, and digs) were recorded for coyotes, kit foxes, common ravens (*Corvus corax*), and domestic dogs (*Canis familiaris*). Scats were noted as occurring individually or as a group of scats or marking area.

Qualitative data were collected for perennial shrubs and non-native annual plants. Fieldworkers recorded species present and placed each species in one of five categories: 1) dominant or ubiquitous, 2) common, 3) sparse, 4) rare, or 5) one or two individuals on transects. Plant nomenclature followed Baldwin et al. (2002). The types of topography, soil surface, and surficial geology were noted by the estimated percentage within the plot. The types of topography included alluvial fan, badlands, lake beds, large and small washes, rolling hills (low), sand dunes, very large boulders, very steep slopes or cliffs, volcanic field, or other. The categories of surfaces of the substratum were designed to estimate the ease of walking for tortoises: 1) alluvial fan, valley floor, no obstacles; 2) alluvial fan, valley floor with minor obstacles; 3) desert pavement (tortoises can walk on it); 4) rocky surface (very difficult for walking); 5) steep, rocky surfaces (very difficult walking); and 6) other. The definitions for surficial geology were designed to measure ease of constructing and maintaining burrows or other cover sites: 1) sandy loam, easy digging and will support a burrow; 2) wash banks with easy digging and supporting a

burrow or cave; 3) existing caliche caves in washes, easy digging under granitic boulders; 4) surficial geology not amenable for supporting burrows or only a rare burrow; and 5) other.

Anthropogenic impacts were quantified and included: cattle or sheep sign (scat, trails and wallows); trash (separated into general, balloons, and firearm casings/targets); people (present or as footprints); people (evidence of vandalism); paved roads, dirt roads, vehicle tracks (categorized as recent, old, or denuded area); road berms or other berms to redirect water; evidence of fire/campsites; fences; mining (pits, excavations); power/utility lines; signs of domestic dogs; structures; and other.

Comprehensive Searches of 47 Plots for Tortoises.

Teams of several people searched for live tortoises and remains on each plot between May 5 and June 10 in spring and September 15 and October 31 in fall by walking 15-m wide transects. When a tortoise was located, it was processed using standard procedures described in earlier reports (e.g., Berry and Mack 2008). Briefly, the health/disease research team evaluated the tortoises for health status using a seven page health evaluation form, a modification of the appendix in Berry and Christopher (2001). Samples of blood were drawn from most tortoises, either by subcarapacial or brachial venipuncture using standard protocols (Hernandez-Divers et al. 2002, Berry et al. 2006a). Samples of blood that contained $\geq 10\%$ lymph were considered to be suboptimal because of the potential for dilution (e.g., Gottdenker and Jacobson 1995, Berry et al. 2005). A nasal lavage was taken only on tortoises with clinical signs of upper respiratory tract disease. Plasma and nasal samples were shipped to the Mycoplasma Laboratory at the University of Florida to determine the presence of antibodies to *Mycoplasma agassizii* or *M. testudineum* using enzyme-linked immunoassay (ELISA) tests (Schumacher et al. 1993; Brown et al. 1994, 1995, 2001, 2004; Wendland et al. 2007). The nasal lavage samples were cultured and if *Mycoplasma* spp. grew in culture, then the taxon was identified (Brown et al. 2002).

RESULTS

Preliminary Surveys of the 45 Plots

The distances that fieldworkers walked on transects for each plot ranged from 5.3 to 11.0 km; most plots received ≥ 6.4 km of transects. For all 45 plots, 11 live tortoises, remains of 59 dead tortoises, 29 active and 152 inactive cover sites, and 152 scats were observed on 432 km of transects (Table 1). Counts of tortoise sign per kilometer of transect varied from 0.0/km to 4.09/km with plots 1, 2, 3, 4, 12, 20, and 21 having high counts (2.18–4.09/km), followed by plots 5, 9, 10, 18, and 26 with counts of 1.00–1.91/km. Twenty-two plots had counts of 0.2–0.9 sign/km, and 11 plots had very low sign counts (0–0.18/km).

Observations of predators or predator sign included coyote, kit fox, ravens, bobcats, and domestic dogs. Sign counts of predators per kilometer of transect ranged

from a low of 0.23/km on plot 32 to a high of 7.97/km on plot 7 (Table 2). Plots with high sign counts per transect (2.0–7.97/km), in descending order, included: 7, 8, 35, 4, 1, 27, 34, and 5. Lower counts of sign (<1.0/km) were on plots 6, 10, 14, 22, 28, 30, 32, 36, 37, 38, 41, and 63. The plots with sign or sounds of domestic dogs were 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 22, and 27.

The perennial vegetation, represented by 23 species of shrubs, Joshua trees, and four species of perennial grass, varied from plot to plot (Table 3). Overall, creosote bush (*Larrea tridentata*) and burro bush (*Ambrosia dumosa*) were among the top five dominant (common to abundant) species on 40 plots. Salt bushes (*Atriplex* spp.), family Chenopodiaceae (e.g., allscale, *A. polycarpa*; shadscale, *A. confertifolia*; four-wing salt bush, *A. canescens*) formed the dominant vegetation on 5 plots (6, 7, 36, 40, 47). Some species of salt bushes thrive in disturbed areas (allscale, four-wing salt bush), adjacent to playas, and in alkaline soils—all areas of potentially poor habitat for tortoises. Playas, areas with the appearance of old lake beds, and vegetation typical of alkaline soils were present on plots 36 and 47. Cooper's golden bush (*Ericameria cooperi*), a colonizer or “increaser” species, is typical in areas grazed by livestock because it is unpalatable. It can be a sign of fair to poor range condition, especially when it is common. Eleven plots had Cooper's golden bush among the top five perennial species (plots 8, 19, 37, 38, 39, 41, 44, 45, 61, 62, 64).

Using the transects and observations of the landscape, the topography and surficial geology were evaluated to assess suitability for tortoises to travel, construct burrows, and have suitable cover to survive temperature extremes during or after translocation. Much of the area was composed of valley floor, alluvial fans and low, rolling hills cut with small washes or washlets—topographic features that are typical of tortoise habitat. Elevations ranged from 604–1205 m; 20 (43%) of the plots were below 950 m (plots 1–7, 10–14, 20–23, 27, 29, 36, 40, and 47). However some sites contained unsuitable habitat or areas that would support few or no tortoises: playas or barren areas that appeared to be either old lakebeds or heavily disturbed sites denuded of vegetation (parts of plots 36, 40, and 47), volcanic fields, badlands, steep slopes with cliffs, and boulder fields (parts of plots 3, 6, 9, 16, 19, 20, 21, 22, 24, 25, 27, 28, 29, 32, 38, 39, 45, 62) (Table 4). The plots were ranked on whether the topography was suitable, as well as the percentage of the plot where the tortoise could walk and dig a burrow. Most plots showed high potential for supporting tortoises based solely on topography and surficial geology (90–100% of habitat usable): 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 12, 13, 14, 16, 17, 18, 20, 21, 22, 23, 30, 33, 46, 37, 40, 41, 44, 61, 63, and 64. The next or mid-level group of plots had 50–89% usable and suitable habitat: 3, 19, 24, 25, 26, 27, 29, 32, 34, 26, 38, 39, 45, 47, and 62. The plots with 10 to 40% suitable habitat were 9 and 28.

Anthropogenic impacts for the plots are summarized in Table 5. The transects represent a surface area of 0.053–0.11 km², or 2–4% of each plot. The most common types were balloons (all plots), trash (44 of 45 plots), old vehicle tracks (43 of 45 plots), and firearm casings/targets (43 of 45 plots). Plots 47, 23, 21, and 14, in descending order, had the highest numbers of balloons; plots 2, 47, 7, 5, 10, and 6 had higher levels of trash than elsewhere. Firearm casings and shooting targets were present on all but plots 2 and

21, with higher levels on plots 5, 26, 14, 62, 47, and 44 (descending order of counts) than on other plots. Ordnance was observed on plots 1, 4, 12, 14, and 23; possible unexploded ordnance was present on plot 63 (Table 5, notes). At the edge of plot 10 were 21 tires; on plot 38, 16 vehicle tires in 3 groups of 10, 3, and 3 had been bolted together and dragged to the southeast corner of the plot.

Recent vehicle tracks were present on transects for 35 of 45 plots and old vehicle tracks were evident on 43 of 45 plots (Table 5). Plots with higher levels of recent tracks included 29, 6, 13, 41, 5 and 28 (descending order); plots with higher levels of old tracks were 41, 6, 29, 9, 21, 17, 20, 16, and 30 (descending order). Active motorcycle trails were noted on 19/45 plots, with more trails on plots 41 and 19 than others. Dirt roads at densities of 0.11–2.53 km of transect/plot were present on 37/45 plots. Some plots had major dirt roads that were a part of or led to points of interest: plot 64, the Twenty Mule Team Road; plot 63, road to Blackwater Well; plot 29, Black Canyon Road and Black Mountain Wilderness; plots 17, 25, and 31 Copper City Road; plot 26, Opal Mountain Road and road to springs; plot 5, Hinkley Road; plots 1 and 2, road to Fossil Canyon; plot 3, adjacent to Rainbow Basin; plot 12, crossed by Coolgardie Road; plot 18, routes leading to Williams, Lane, and Noble wells; and plot 33, BLM route C312. In addition, many plots had dirt roads along one or more boundaries to the north, east, south, and/or west.

Cross-country motorcycle trails and tracks were observed on transects for plots 6, 9, 16, 17, 19 (cross-country motorcycle trail following an unauthorized route marked by orange flagging), 22, 24, 25, 27, and 29 (Table 5). Areas severely damaged and/or denuded, probably by vehicles, occurred on plots 6, 10, 16, and 30. Nine plots had camping and/or shooting areas. Plot 30 had an apparent stolen car with belongings (CA license 1LJA319). Plot 41 had a shrine consisting of an upright motorcycle with other off-road vehicle (ORV) parts scattered about, e.g. ~40 plaques commemorating deceased ORV racers, and an American flag. Sixteen people in four groups visited the shrine while the fieldworker was walking transects. Discarded signs (vandalism) for vehicle routes, closed areas, and Wilderness were found on plots 7, 29, 30, 36, and 41.

Livestock scat and/or bones were present on transects for 25 of 45 plots (Table 5). Livestock sign was highest on plot 7, followed by plots 6, 61, 5, and 4 (descending order). Plot 6 had heavy pressure with almost no shrubs present; an old cattle watering site is on plot. Old cattle trails are evident on plot 7. Plots 6 and 7 are bordered by active agricultural fields; plot 6 has a ranch. Signs of a burn were on plot 44. Signs of domestic or feral dogs (scats, barking) were observed on plots 6, 7, 14, and 27; kennels with > 100 dogs were on plot 7. Plot 29 has an upland game guzzler, which is a known source of death to tortoises (depending on whether it has been retrofitted or appropriately fenced).

Mining activities were evident on transects for 15 of the 45 plots (Table 5). Hazards in the form of mining shafts, pits, and well casings—sources of deaths for tortoises—were present on plots 7, 16, 19, 24, and 30. Current and historic placer mining (craters, pits, trenches) has or is occurring on plots 9, 10, 16, 17, 18, 24, and 25.

Abandoned shacks, probably associated with mining and/or livestock use or both, were present or nearby on plots 9, 16, 18, and 19.

When the total counts of impacts per kilometer of transect are summed and a grand total is computed for each plot, plot 7 has the highest level of impacts (143.60), followed, in descending order by plots 6, 2, 47, and 41 (Table 5). The impacts are not weighted by potential severity or risk of mortality for the tortoises with this method, however.

The land where the plots occur is currently managed primarily by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). Plots 61, 62 and 64 are on the boundary with the Naval Air Weapons Station (NAWS). The southwest corner of plot 62 borders the northeast corner of the Cuddeback Impact Area, an area with substantial surface disturbance in limited areas and formerly under the jurisdiction of the Air Force.

The region in which the 47 plots occur has several points of interest for recreationists who visit BLM-administered lands (U.S. BLM, 1980 as amended): the Grass Valley Wilderness and Black Mountain Wilderness; the Barstow Woolly Sunflower Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC), Harper Dry Lake ACEC, Rainbow Basin National Natural Landmark ACEC, Inscription Canyon Petroglyph Site, Superior Dry Lake (used for land sailing), Cuddeback Dry Lake (numerous recreation uses), and Owl Canyon Campground.

Evaluation of Tortoise Sign from Comprehensive Surveys of 47 Plots

Forty-seven of the 48 plots in the study design received comprehensive surveys in 2009; the exception was plot 31, which was previously surveyed in fall of 2008. The objectives were to locate 15 to 20 live adult tortoises, conduct health evaluations and collect blood and potentially nasal lavage samples for ELISA tests and cultures for *Mycoplasma agassizii* and *M. testudineum*. Data were also collected on numbers of live tortoises, shell-skeletal remains, burrows, scats and other sign (Table 6). From 0 to 21 live tortoises and from 0 to 87 shell-skeletal remains of tortoises were found on each plot, for a total of 267 live tortoises and 1457 dead tortoises. When the counts of live tortoises were converted to live tortoises observed per kilometer walked, plot 12 had the highest number, followed by plots 3, 20, 4, 36, and 24. No live tortoises were found on plots 6, 7, 17, 28, 29, 30, 35, 41, 61 and 64. Likewise, when all the live and dead tortoises, burrows, scats and other types of sign are summed and converted to sign per kilometer walked, plot 12 had the highest counts, followed by plots 20, 2, 3, 1, and 4. Plots 6, 7, 30, 41, and 61 had substantially lower counts, and the sign was of shell-skeletal remains, inactive burrows, and scat. Many plots had high ratios of dead to living tortoises (plots 8, 13, 14, 22, 23) or many remains and no live tortoises (plots 17, 28, 29, 30, 35).

Tortoises (N=267) were observed in and out of burrows during the comprehensive surveys of plots. Of these, only 9 (3.4%) were juveniles or immature sizes (Table 7). Of the 267 tortoises, 240 received health evaluations. The sex ratio of subadult and adult tortoises was 141 males to 99 females and was significantly different

from the expected 1:1 ratio ($Z = 2.769$, $p < 0.05$); no adult tortoises were found on five plots. Three plots (8, 13, 14) had live tortoises, but none of the tortoises received health evaluations because tortoises could not be retrieved from burrows or were too small for sampling.

The Health Status of Tortoises on 47 Plots

Two hundred forty tortoises were evaluated for health. Of the 240 tortoises, a total of 21 tortoises ($21/240 = 8.75\%$) had positive or suspect ELISA tests (Figures 2 and 3). Fourteen of the 21 tortoises with suspect or positive ELISA tests were males. Thirteen tortoises had positive ELISA tests and 8 had suspect ELISA tests for *M. agassizii*. One tortoise had positive ELISA tests for both *M. agassizii* and *M. testudineum* (tortoise 7324). These tortoises had mild to severe clinical signs of upper respiratory tract disease (URTD) (Table 8). Ten tortoises with negative ELISA tests for *Mycoplasma* spp. also exhibited moderate to severe clinical signs of URTD (Table 9).

We conducted a preliminary analysis of trauma to the shell and limbs of the 240 tortoises and identified 42 individuals that showed signs of having been attacked by a canid predator, particularly a domestic dog. These tortoises had moderate to severe damage to the gular horn and other parts of the shell and limbs (Table 10). Tortoises with signs of this type of attack occurred on 21 plots (Figure 4).

DISCUSSION

NOTE: some material is repeated from Berry (2009)

Suitability of Habitat at the 47 Sites for the Translocatees

The following discussion is based on the assumption that the 47 sites are typical of habitat in the general area where translocatees from the WEA are likely to be released. It is similar to the information presented in Berry (2009) for the 2008 Progress Report on the same topic.

Many factors should be considered in determining whether an area or region is suitable to receive several hundred translocated tortoises. Questions to be addressed include, but are not limited to:

- Is the habitat where the translocatees will be placed similar to the original home sites of the translocatees? How similar? Elevation, rainfall patterns, cover values and composition of perennial plants, and surficial geology are important factors.
- Do the release sites present hazards to the tortoises?
- Will the release sites support the translocatees? Will forage be adequate and of the appropriate composition of species? What is known about the annual plants at home sites vs. potential release sites?

- Will the translocated tortoises be likely to remain at the new home sites or will they leave? If the translocatees are likely to travel until they find habitat similar to the original home sites, where is the nearest such habitat?
- If translocatees move away from the release sites, what hazards might they encounter and would these hazards reduce their potential for survival? What is the proximity of the hazards?

We do not have answers to all of the questions above, nor are data currently available to address all of the questions. We do have some relevant information on the original home sites and the potential release area from visits to the home sites and from transects walked on the 47 plots. The elevations where the potential translocatees now live are generally higher (>900 to 1300 m) than on the 47 sampled plots (604 to 1205 m). Twenty (43%) of the plots were <950 m in elevation. The composition of perennial plants where most of the potential translocatees now live is, in general, typical of higher elevations, e.g., areas with Joshua tree woodlands, mixed desert scrub, and a creosote bush-mixed scrub. In contrast, a substantial part of the perennial vegetation in the areas proposed for release of translocatees is typical of lower, more alkaline areas with playas and old dry lakebeds, badlands, and volcanic fields. While there are areas with Joshua trees and mixed desert scrub, such sites are more limited and patchy in distribution. Most of the tortoises likely to be translocated may have had little experience with the almost monotypic allscale and other alkali sink communities that border playas, old dry lake beds, disturbed areas, and edges of some volcanic fields—habitats that are common in the proposed release areas and that may present hazards of exposure due to low cover of shrubs and limitations on constructing burrows. The above statements are generalities based on field observations.

The lands proposed for release of the translocatees probably have had a more layered and complex history of disturbance than the lands where the potential translocatees now live. The history of human uses is relevant because anthropogenic uses affect condition of habitat, biomass of forage available for tortoises, cover of shrubs, and potential hazards to survival. For convenience, we can divide the Central Mojave Desert into lands considered as potential release areas (west and south, where plots 1–64 occur in the WETA) and home sites of the WEA translocatees (east).

The lands have been used by people for a long time. Native Americans used the region and water sources. One such water source, now known as Blackwater Well (close to plots 61–64), was used at least periodically from ~1200 B.C. to 1820 A.D. (Whitley 1999, National Register of Historic Places 2000). The west Central Mojave Desert was crossed both north-south and east-west from the 1850s by explorers, government employees from the General Land Office, settlers, and travelers headed to points of interest and mining towns (see Bureau of Land Management, 1854, 1855, 1856; Surveyor General of California 1857; Bancroft and Co. 1868; Birnie 1876; Wheeler 1879; Palmer 1891; Merriam 1893). Roads were already described in journals in 1855-1856 (Bureau of Land Management [McDonald], 1855-56). A principal north-south route extended from the vicinity of Barstow north to Pilot Knob, and from Pilot Knob north to Panamint City, Darwin, and many mining towns. The route to Pilot Knob also had travelers heading

west to Blackwater Well, to springs in the El Paso Mountains and to points further west (e.g., Kernville, Central Valley), as well as east to Death Valley and parts of the eastern Mojave Desert. The Twenty Mule Team Road is an example of an east-west/southwest route from Death Valley to the rail head at Mojave (Weight 1955); it passed through the Pilot Knob area and Granite Wells. Travelers removed shrubs for fire wood, a “desert load of hay,” for personal use and for the mills, stripping areas of vegetation (Spears 1892, Hufford 1902, Mendenhall 1909). These routes were also stock driveways.

Livestock, primarily sheep and cattle, grazed throughout the area from at least the 1870s (Birnie, 1876, Palmer 1891, Spears 1892, Starry 1974) until the 1990s. Feral burros are still common on the NAWS in the south range, adjacent to the study area. The west half of the area has several former grazing allotments, as well as numerous springs, wells, and troughs (Mendenhall 1909, Thompson 1921). The distribution and density of the water sources is an important consideration in terms of hazards to tortoises and current habitat condition. Each of the water sources is likely to have an associated piosphere of disturbance (Brooks et al. 2006), limited cover of perennial shrubs, and increased cover of alien annual plants. Piospheres and associated waters may also serve as attractants to predators. The travel corridors and history of livestock grazing are important in terms of evaluating the potential of release areas to support high quality forage for the tortoises (e.g., Brooks and Berry 2006). Some parts of the proposed release area, e.g., former travel corridors or grazing allotments, may no longer have the supply and composition of annuals essential for maintaining healthy tortoises (Ofstedal 2002). The east Central Mojave Desert, where the potential translocatees now live, may have more suitable forage. These topics are appropriate for hypothesis testing.

Human traffic and recreation pressures in the WETA are likely to be more substantial than observed in the lands associated with tortoises translocated from the SEA in 2008. (Using Desert Access Guides, compare distribution of ACECs, wilderness areas, National Natural Landmarks in the proposed release areas for WEA tortoises with the existing release areas for the SEA tortoises). The locations and densities of graded and ungraded dirt roads, authorized designated routes and unauthorized motorcycle trails, campgrounds, ACECs, designated wilderness, and hunting sites should be documented, mapped, and included in the revised model. Vehicle traffic on roads and unauthorized off-road vehicle use present risks to tortoises (Keith and Berry 2005; Berry et al. 2008; Boarman and Sazaki 2006; Keith et al. 2008). For example, in 2008 and 2009 at least two of 158 translocated tortoises in the health research program were killed by vehicles on dirt roads and a third translocated tortoise was trapped in its damaged burrow by a person travelling off a designated route during the first nine months post-translocation (Berry et al. 2009). No roads have been fenced to protect tortoises in the areas proposed as release sites in the WETA.

The fieldworkers who walking transects for the preliminary surveys of plots recorded the presence of several unfenced mining shafts or holes—hazards (deaths) to tortoises. The shafts, ordnance, campgrounds, agricultural areas, settlements (including individual dwellings) are other potential hazards. The transects walked as part of the

preliminary surveys covered from 2 to 4% of the surface area of plots; thus far more hazards occur on plots than were identified.

Status and Health of Desert Tortoises on the 47 Plots

For the purposes of this discussion, we assume that the data on tortoises, collected from the 47 plots, represent the distribution, relative abundance, status, and health of tortoises in the general area where translocatees from the WEA are likely to be released. Questions to be addressed include, but are not limited to:

- What is the distribution and relative abundance of tortoises in the proposed release area?
- What is the composition of the population (size-age class, sex ratio)? What are mortality rates and causes of death?
- What is the distribution of tortoises with infectious diseases? What is the prevalence of disease and trauma?
- Does the current distribution reflect habitat quality or some other factors? Why do some plots with apparently good habitat for tortoises have few signs of tortoises? What historic information is available for the region for tortoise populations and how do the data assist us in understanding the current condition of the population?
- What is the carrying capacity of the area for tortoises now and in the near future, given the likelihood of climate change and a warmer, drier desert in this part of the Southwest? What are potential effects of releasing several hundred tortoises into this area?

We have preliminary answers to some questions. Data are currently unavailable or insufficient to address all of the questions. Both the counts of tortoise sign and the more comprehensive coverage of 47 plots support several key points:

(1) Sign Counts and Live Tortoises. Sign counts from the comprehensive coverage of 47 plots indicate that tortoises were present in the recent past or are currently present on all plots. Plots can be grouped by level of sign counts from very low to high. Sign counts were very low (0.02–0.07/km of transect) on plots 6, 7, 30, 41, and 61. On these plots, sign consisted of combinations of dead tortoises, inactive burrows or scat; no live tortoises were observed. The next group, plots with low sign (0.12 to 0.30/km of transect) included plots 8, 13, 22, 35, 37, 38, 42, 44, and 45. With one exception (plot 35), all nine plots had 1 to 4 live tortoises, and several had high ratios of dead to live tortoises.

Plots with 0.34 to 0.62 sign/km of transect form the next group with moderate or low moderate levels of sign (16, 17, 19, 23, 25–29, 32, 34, 40, 46, 47, 62, and 64). These plots have from 0 to 7 live tortoises and several have high ratios of dead to live tortoises. The dead tortoises account for a substantial portion of sign on many of these plots. Plots with 0.79 to 0.97 sign/km of transect include 5, 14, 22, 24, 39, and 63. Plots 5, 14, 22, and 63 had from 2 to 5 live tortoises, whereas plots 24 and 39 had 15 and 10 live

tortoises, respectively. Plot 24 and 39 may fit better into the group of plots with moderately high numbers of live tortoises (plots 1, 2, 3, 4, 9, 10, 12, 18, 20, 21, and 36).

In general, the plots with moderate to high sign counts and numbers of live tortoises occur primarily between Black Mountain Wilderness on the west and the Copper City Road on the east. This block extends north to the vicinity of Murphy's Well. There are four "outliers" with moderate to high counts of live tortoises to this block: two plots to the east of the Copper City Road (plots 18 and 24) and two plots to the west and south of Superior Dry Lake (plots 36 and 39). Plots with the lower sign counts are in the northwestern, western, and southwestern parts of the study area.

(2) Counts of Shell-skeletal Remains and Live Tortoises. Shell-skeletal remains of subadult and adult tortoises may persist for many years in the desert. We counted shell-skeletal remains but did not undertake a comprehensive assessment of estimated time since death or cause(s) of death. With this limited information in hand, we can sort the plots into four groups. (The notes below are estimates, given that each set of remains was not analyzed.)

a. Low numbers (0–6) of both live tortoises and shell-skeletal remains, implying very low densities in last 10 years (plots 6, 7, 26, 30, 37, 41, 42, 47, 61-64)

b. No or low to moderate numbers of live tortoises (0–10) but numbers of shell-skeletal remains were also low to moderate (9–23), implying that more tortoises occurred on the site recently but the density was low to moderate in the recent past (plots 5, 8, 16, 18, 25, 33, 34, 38, 40, 44, 45, 46)

c. No or low numbers of live tortoises (0–8) but moderate to high numbers of shell-skeletal remains (30–87), implying that tortoise densities were substantially higher in the last 10 to 20 years (plots 9, 13, 14, 17, 19, 23, 27-29, 32, 35, 37)

d. Numbers of live tortoises ≥ 10 and numbers of shell-skeletal remains ≥ 30 , implying that densities were higher, possibly double, in the last 10 to 20 years (plots 1-4, 10, 12, 20, 21, 24, 36).

Eighteen plots with low counts of live tortoises and low to high counts of shell-skeletal remains occur in the northwestern and western parts of the study area, extending from the NAWS boundaries in the north to Harper Dry Lake in the south (plots 13, 14, 22, 23, 27-29, 34, 35, 37, 38, 41, 42, 44, 61-64). These 18 plots had 31 live tortoises, 10 of which occurred on plots 62 and 63; they also had remains of 483 tortoises, of which only 4 occurred in the northern part of the study area. Thus the land between the Grass Valley Wilderness and Black Mountain Wilderness and land west of the Black Mountain Wilderness had 27 live tortoises and 479 dead tortoises. We can conclude that the tortoise population experienced a die-off in the last 10 to 20 years and that densities are currently very low in this area. Historically, there were probably more tortoises in the area—Berry and Nicholson (1984) showed estimated densities of ≥ 20 to 50 tortoises/mi² lands to the south and west of the NAWS based on a map developed from strip transects walked in the late 1970s.

(4) Composition of the live tortoise population on the 47 plots. During the comprehensive surveys, 267 tortoises were located above and below ground. Of the 267, all but 9 were adults (96.6%). Two hundred forty adults and subadults were evaluated for health; significantly more males were present in the sample than females, a similar pattern observed in samples of tortoises from the SEA (Berry and Mack 2008).

(5) Infectious Diseases—Mycoplasmosis. Of the 240 tortoises, 8.75% had positive or suspect ELISA tests for *M. agassizii* or *M. testudineum* (Figs. 2-3). The protocol for relocation of tortoises from the WEA to the WETA states that 5 km buffer will be drawn around the locations of tortoises with positive and suspect tests for the two species of *Mycoplasma* (Esque et al. 2009). With the 5 km buffer, limited lands for translocation are available to the south of the WEA in the vicinity of plot 8, 16-18, and 24, as well as lands to the west of Pilot Knob and the Black Mountain Wilderness (Fig. 5). If the data set from the 2008 sampling of WETA plots is also used (plots 13, 16, 17, and 19), then the potential area available for translocation is further limited (Fig. 6). We can expect the map to change further, if and when more tortoises with suspect and positive ELISA tests area found in the WEA.

(6) Suitable Habitat and Anthropogenic Impacts. As described earlier, not all the plots have habitat suitable for release of translocated tortoises. Examples include, but are not limited to plots 6 and 7 (adjacent agricultural fields or disturbed grazing lands), 47 (67% playa, also impacts are high) and 41 (vegetation in fair condition, impacts high). Additional maps will be prepared to delineate suitable habitat and different levels of anthropogenic impacts.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Prior to translocation, data should be collected and analyzed on annual biomass in late winter, spring, summer and fall (with an emphasis on key forage species), and the home sites of tortoises compared with potential release sites.

1. We recommend and plan to conduct surveys of vegetation, soils, and topography of the WEA where the potential translocatees are now living. The survey will include belt or line transects of perennial vegetation with an objective of obtaining data on cover values and composition. Vegetative communities will be mapped, or previous maps, if appropriate for use to describe desert tortoise habitat, will be checked. Data, similar or identical to the data collected on elevations, topography, surficial geology, predator sign counts, and anthropogenic impacts for the 47 plots, will be collected where the potential translocatees are currently living. The data will be analyzed and compared with data from the proposed release areas. With this information, scientists and decision-makers can develop a better understanding of the similarities and differences of current tortoise home sites with the areas considered for release. Answers can be developed for such questions as: do habitats at home sites of the potential translocatees match habitats in the proposed release areas? If not, how much do the habitats differ? Are the habitats that now have very low numbers of tortoises to the west and south of Pilot Knob and Cuddeback Dry Lake have lowered carrying capacity compared with the past? In the

latter case, review of historical journal notes and photographs may provide valuable information.

2. The topic of available forage for tortoises has not been adequately addressed. The presence and availability of high quality forage for tortoises are essential to survival of the tortoises and long-term success of translocation efforts. Prior to translocation, data should be collected and analyzed on annual biomass in late winter, spring, summer and fall (with an emphasis on key forage species in spring), and the home sites of tortoises compared with potential release sites. We propose to undertake this effort in spring of 2010.

3. At the Ft. Irwin science meetings, some scientists and agency personnel have raised the topic of a dispersed release of the translocated tortoises throughout the entire WEA instead of using a clustered release on plots, as was done in the SEA translocation in 2008. This approach is a different experiment than what was done previously for the SEA tortoises and will require hypothesis testing and a research program to monitor the success.

4. We need to have a better understanding why tortoises are absent or virtually absent from some areas in the Central Mojave Desert. We can make the assumption that populations have experienced similar declines to the populations on long-term permanent plots to the west, northwest, and south (Berry and Medica 1995). We can also assume that the causes of decline are numerous, cumulative, and similar to those recorded earlier for the western, central and southern Mojave (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service 1994). Examples include mycoplasmosis and other diseases, drought and starvation, predation by ravens, road kills, vandalism, a change in the composition of available food compared with preferred forage species, and trauma from domestic dogs (e.g., Jacobson et al. 1991, 1994; Berry 1986; Boarman 1993; Boarman and Berry 1995; Christopher et al. 2003; Homer et al. 1998; Brown et al. 1999; Jennings 1997; Berry et al. 1986, 2002, 2006b, 2008; Kristan and Boarman 2003; Keith and Berry, 2005; Boarman and Sasaki 2006; Brooks and Berry 2006, Brooks et al. 2006; Johnson et al. 2006; Keith et al. 2008; Carlson et al. in review).

From our preliminary evaluation of the data from the 48 plots as well as the data collected in 2008 using different sample sites, we can obtain a better understanding of historical and current issues by mapping and modeling the distribution and densities of the tortoises, the habitat types, results of disease and health sampling, and the many different types of anthropogenic impacts. We plan to undertake this effort using the existing data sets in 2010.

5. For the analysis of anthropogenic impacts, we will re-evaluate and weight the anthropogenic impacts. For example, roads will be separated by type: paved, dirt with high berms and high use, dirt with low berms and high use, low use dirt roads, authorized and unauthorized motorcycle trails, etc. The Copper City Road, for example, has high berms in some areas and has been observed to trap tortoises within the road bed. Recreation areas (e.g., Inscription Canyon, Fossil Beds, Cuddeback Dry Lake and

Superior Dry Lake) where people concentrate will be included, as well as agricultural fields, where active or abandoned. The locations of individual homes and settlements will be part of the analysis. Likewise, the volcanic fields and small lakebeds will be identified, even if relatively small, and treated as potentially hazardous areas.

6. As time permits, the shell-skeletal remains on the existing plots should be re-evaluated for time since death, size-age class, and potential causes of death.

7. Prior to translocation, mining and other hazards should be fenced to exclude tortoises.

8. The current and most up-to-date literature on climate change projections forecast a drier Mojave Desert. It is essential the climate change be considered as a potential factor in at least one of the revised models.

9. An increase in infectious disease(s) should be considered as part of the revised model, based on experiences from the SEA translocation in 2008.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Dr. Mary Brown and Dr. Lori Wendland are collaborators on this project, provided valuable advice on interpretations, and will be co-authors on any future publications for the open literature. Dr. Elliott Jacobson, also of the University of Florida, a pathologist, will be recognized or co-authors on appropriate future publications. The field team, headed by K. Anderson included: I. Alexakos, A. Al-Hadad, C. Bedwell, S. Boisvert, J. Boswell, L. Chow, A. DeMartini, C. Furman, M. Giovanini, S. Hanner, C. Hatton, J. Hillman, T. Hockin, E. Holle, J. Holloway, T.G. Jackson, J. Kayser, A. Keller, K. Kermoian, P. Kermoian, B. Kirkpatrick, K. Lucas, R. McGuire, T. Ose, K. Palmer, T. Rasmussen, B. Sandstrom, A. Schaub, A. Scheib, C. Spake, A. Spenceley, B. Vickers, S. Todd, K. Walsh, and Walters. Marcella Waggoner and Nate Newman entered data and performed quality controls on data sets; Tim Gowan generated maps. Kristina Drake coordinated fieldwork with USGS scientists at the Las Vegas Field Station. Thanks are due to K. Phillips, T. Gowan, and R. Jones, for reviews, and to C. Everly for advice. The National Training Center, Ft. Irwin, provided financial support.

REFERENCES

- Baldwin, B.G., S. Boyd, B.J. Ertter, R.W. Patterson, T.J. Rosatti, D.H. Wilken, and M. Wetherwax. 2002. The Jepson Desert Manual: Vascular Plants of Southeastern California. University of California Press, Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London. 624 pp.
- Bancroft, H. H. and Co. 1868. Bancroft's Map of California and Nevada. H. H. Bancroft Company, San Francisco, California.
- Berry, K.H. 1986. Incidence of gunshot deaths in desert tortoises in California. Wildlife Society Bulletin 14:127-132.
- Berry, K.H. 2009. Progress Report. An Evaluation of Desert Tortoises (*Gopherus agassizii*) and Their Habitats at 20 Sample Plots in the Western Expansion Area, Fort Irwin Translocation Project, San Bernardino County, California. Report from the U.S. Geological Survey, Moreno Valley, to the National Training Center, Ft. Irwin, California.

- Berry, K.H., T. Shields, A.P. Woodman, T. Campbell, J. Roberson, K. Bohuski, and A. Karl. 1986. Changes in desert tortoise populations at the Desert Tortoise Research Natural Area between 1979 and 1985. Proc. Symp. Desert Tortoise Council 1986:100-123.
- Berry, K.H., and L.L. Nicholson. 1984. The distribution and density of desert tortoise populations in California in the 1970s. Chapter 2 in K.H. Berry (ed.), The Status of the Desert Tortoise (*Gopherus agassizii*) in the United States. Desert Tortoise Council Report to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Sacramento, California, USA. Order No. 11310-0083-81.
- Berry, K.H., and P. Medica. 1995. Desert tortoises in the Mojave and Colorado deserts. Pages 135-137 in E. L. LaRoe, G. S. Farris, and C. E. Puckett (eds.), Our Living Resources: A report to the nation on the distribution, abundance, and health of U. S. plants, animals, and ecosystems. USDI, National Biological Service, Washington, D.C. 530 p.
- Berry, K. H., and M. M. Christopher. 2001. Guidelines for the field evaluation of desert tortoise health and disease. Journal of Wildlife Diseases 37(3):427-450.
- Berry, K.H., and J. Mack. 2008. Progress Report for 2007. The Health Status of Resident Desert Tortoises (*Gopherus agassizii*) in the Fort Irwin Translocation Area, San Bernardino County, California. U.S. Geological Survey, Western Ecological Research Center, Moreno Valley, California. Final Report to National Training Center and Ft. Irwin, California. 47pp with appendices.
- Berry, K.H., E.K. Spangenberg, B.L. Homer, and E.R. Jacobson. 2002. Deaths of desert tortoises following periods of drought and research manipulation. Chelonian Conservation and Biology 4:436-448.
- Berry, K.H., L.D. Wendland, A. Demmon, and M.B. Brown. 2005. A comparison of lymph and plasma sample results from ELISA tests for *Mycoplasma agassizii* in desert tortoises. Presentation and Abstract from the 30th Annual Desert Tortoise Council Symposium, held in Tucson, Arizona. February 2005.
- Berry, K.H., A. Demmon, T. Bailey, and J. Mack. 2006a. Protocols for drawing blood from the brachial plexus and subcarapacial site of desert tortoises: Instructions for Ordering Equipment and Culture Media; Summary of How to Draw Blood and Information on How to Contract for Laboratory Analysis and Shipping Laboratory Samples. Appendix on New Technique for Conducting Nasal Lavages by L. Wendland. U.S. Geological Survey, Moreno Valley, CA. 14 p.
- Berry, K.H., T.Y. Bailey, and K.M. Anderson. 2006b. Attributes of desert tortoise populations at the National Training Center, Central Mojave Desert, California, USA. Journal of Arid Environments 67:165-191 (Special Supplement).
- Berry, K.H., K. Keith, and T. Bailey. 2008. Status of the desert tortoise in Red Rock Canyon State Park. California Fish and Game 94(2):98-118.
- Berry, K.H., T. Gowan, and J. Mack. 2009. Progress Report for 2008. The Health Status, survival and Movements of 158 Translocated Desert Tortoises (*Gopherus agassizii*) in

- the Southern Expansion Area of the Fort Irwin Translocation Area, San Bernardino County, California: Year 1. U.S. Geological Survey, Moreno Valley, California. 33 p.
- Birnie, R. Jr. 1876. Appendix D. Executive report of Lieutenant R. Birnie, Jr., Thirteenth United States Infantry on the Operations of Party No. 2, California Section, Field Season of 1875. *In* Wheeler, Lt. G. M. 1876. Annual Report upon the geographic surveys west of the one hundredth meridian, in California, Nevada, Utah, Colorado, Wyoming, New Mexico, Arizona, and Montana. Appendix JJ of the Ann. Report of the Chief of Engineers for 1876. Washington Government: Printing Office. Pp. 351-355.
- Boarman, W.I. 1993. When a native predator becomes a pest: a case study. Pages 191-206 in S.K. Majumdar, E.W. Miller, D.E. Baker, E.K. Brown, J.R. Pratt, and R.F. Schmalz, (eds.). Conservation and Resource Management. Pennsylvania Academy of Sciences, Easton.
- Boarman, W.I., and K.H. Berry. 1995. Common ravens in the southwestern United States, 1968-92. Pages 73-75 in: E.L. LaRoe, G.S. Farris, and C.E. Puckett, (eds.), Our Living Resources: A report to the nation on the distribution, abundance, and health of U. S. plants, animals, and ecosystems. USDI, National Biological Service, Washington, D.C. 530 p.
- Boarman, W.I., and M. Sasaki. 2006. A highway's road-effect zone for desert tortoises (*Gopherus agassizii*). *Journal of Arid Environments* 65:94-101.
- Brooks, M.L., and K.H. Berry. 2006. Dominance and environmental correlates of alien annual plants in the Mojave Desert, USA. *Journal of Arid Environments* 67:100-124.
- Brooks, M.L., J.R. Matchett, and K.H. Berry. 2006. Effects of livestock watering sites on alien and native plants in the Mojave Desert, USA. *Journal of Arid Environments* 67:125-147.
- Brown, D.R., B.C. Crenshaw, G.S. McLaughlin, I.M. Schumacher, C.E. McKenna, P.A. Klein, E.R. Jacobson, and M.B. Brown. 1995. Taxonomic analysis of the tortoise mycoplasma *Mycoplasma agassizii* and *Mycoplasma testudinis* by 16S rRNA gene sequence comparison. *International Journal of Systematic Bacteriology* 45:348-350.
- Brown, D.R., J.L. Merritt, E. R. Jacobson, P.A. Klein, J.G. Tully, and M.B. Brown. 2004. *Mycoplasma testudineum* sp. nov., from a desert tortoise (*Gopherus agassizii*) with upper respiratory tract disease. *International Journal of Systematic and Evolutionary Microbiology* 45(5):1527-1529.
- Brown, D.R., I.M. Schumacher, G.S. McLaughlin, L.D. Wendland, M.B. Brown, P.A. Klein, and E. R. Jacobson. 2002. Application of diagnostic tests for mycoplasmal infections of desert and gopher tortoises, with management recommendations. *Chelonian Conservation Biology* 4(2):497-507.
- Brown, M.B., I.M. Shumacher, P.A. Klein, K. Harris, T. Correll, and E.R. Jacobson. 1994. *Mycoplasma agassizii* causes upper respiratory tract disease in the desert tortoise. *Infection and Immunity* 62(10):4580-4586.

- Brown, M.B., K.H. Berry, I.M. Schumacher, K.A. Nagy, M.M. Christopher, and P.A. Klein. 1999. Seroepidemiology of upper respiratory tract disease in the desert tortoise in the western Mojave Desert of California. *Journal of Wildlife Diseases* 35(4):716-727.
- Brown, M.B., D.R. Brown, P.A. Klein, G.S. McLaughlin, I.M. Schumacher, E.R. Jacobson, H.P. Adams, and J.G. Tully. 2001. *Mycoplasma agassizii* sp. nov., isolated from the upper respiratory tract of the desert tortoise (*Gopherus agassizii*) and the gopher tortoise (*Gopherus polyphemus*). *International Journal of Systematic and Evolutionary Microbiology* 51:413-418.
- Bureau of Land Management. 1855, 1877, and 1896. Cadastral Survey Records and Plats for T29S R 42E: Years 1855 (Washburn), 1877 (Carlton), and 1896 (Kaerth). California Desert District Office, Moreno Valley, California. Microfiche Records.
- Bureau of Land Management. 1854, 1855, and 1856. Cadastral Survey Records and Plats for T29S R 43E: Years 1854 (Washburn), 1855 (Tivy), and 1856 (McDonald). California Desert District Office, Moreno Valley, California. Microfiche Records.
- Bureau of Land Management. 1854, 1855, and 1913. Cadastral Survey Records and Plats for T29S R 44E: Years 1854 (Washburn), 1855 (Tivy), and 1913 (Cauble). California Desert District Office, Moreno Valley, California. Microfiche Records.
- Bureau of Land Management. 1854 and 1855. Cadastral Survey Records and Plats for T30S R 42E: Years 1854 (Washburn) and 1855 (McDonald). California Desert District Office, Moreno Valley, California. Microfiche Records.
- Bureau of Land Management. 1854 and 1855. Cadastral Survey Records and Plats for T 30S R 43E: Years 1854 (Washburn) and 1855 (McDonald). California Desert District Office, Moreno Valley, California. Microfiche Records.
- Bureau of Land Management. 1855 and 1911. Cadastral Survey Records and Plats for T 30S R44E: Years 1855 (Washburn) and Caudle (1911). California Desert District Office, Moreno Valley, California. Microfiche Records.
- Carlson, A.D., K.H. Berry, and J. Mack. (In review). The Threat to Wild Desert Tortoises (*Gopherus agassizii*) from Dogs (*Canis familiaris*) in California: A Risk Model.
- Christopher, M.M., K.H. Berry, B.T. Henen, and K.A. Nagy. 2003. Clinical disease and laboratory abnormalities in free-ranging desert tortoises in California (1990-1995). *Journal of Wildlife Diseases* 39 (1):35-56.
- Esque, T.C., K.E. Nussear, and P.A. Medica. 2005. Desert tortoise translocation plan for Fort Irwin's Land Expansion Program at the U.S. Army National Training Center (NTC) & Fort Irwin. U.S. Geological Survey, Henderson, Nevada. 24 June 2005.
- Esque, T.C., K.E. Nussear, K.K. Drake, K.H. Berry, P.A. Medica, and J.S. Heaton. 2009. Amendment to the Desert Tortoise Translocation Plan for Fort Irwin's Land Expansion Program at the U. S. Army National Training Center (NTC) and Fort Irwin. U.S. Geological Survey, Henderson, NV.

- Gottdenker, N.L., and E.R. Jacobson. 1995. Effect of venipuncture sites on hematologic and clinical biochemical values in desert tortoises (*Gopherus agassizii*). *American Journal of Veterinary Research* 56(1):19-21.
- Gowan, T., and K.H. Berry. 2010. Progress Report, 2009. The Health Status of Translocated Desert Tortoises (*Gopherus agassizii*) in the Fort Irwin Translocation Area and Surrounding Release Plots, San Bernardino County, California: Year 2. Report from the U.S. Geological Survey, Moreno Valley, to the National Training Center, Ft. Irwin.
- Hernandez-Divers, S.M., S.J. Hernandez-Divers, and J. Wyneken. 2002. Angiographic, anatomic and clinical technique descriptions of a subcarapacial venipuncture site for chelonians. *Journal of Herpetological Medicine and Surgery* 12(2):32-37.
- Homer, B.L., K.H. Berry M.B. Brown, G. Ellis, and E.R. Jacobson. 1998. Pathology of diseases in desert tortoises from California. *Journal of Wildlife Diseases* 34(3):508-523.
- Hufford, D. A. 1902. *Death Valley; Swamper Ike's Traditional Lore: Why, When, How?* D.A. Hufford & Co., Publishers, Los Angeles, California. 43 pp.
- Jacobson, E.R., J.M. Gaskin, M.B. Brown, R.K. Harris, C.H. Gardiner, J.L. LaPointe, H.P. Adams, and C. Reggiardo. 1991. Chronic upper respiratory tract disease of free-ranging desert tortoises (*Xerobates agassizii*). *Journal of Wildlife Diseases* 27:296-316.
- Jacobson, E.R., T.J. Wronski, J. Schumacher, C. Reggiardo, and K.H. Berry. 1994. Cutaneous dyskeratosis in free-ranging desert tortoises, *Gopherus agassizii*, in the Colorado Desert of Southern California. *Journal of Zoo and Wildlife Medicine* 25(1):68-81.
- Jennings, W.B. 1997. Habitat use and food preferences of the desert tortoise, *Gopherus agassizii*, in the western Mojave Desert and impacts of off-road vehicles. Pages 42-45 in J. Van Abbema (ed.), *Proceedings: Conservation, Restoration, and Management of Tortoises and Turtles—An International Conference*. New York Turtle and Tortoise Society and WCS Turtle Recovery Program, New York, New York.
- Johnson, A.J., D.J. Morafka, and E.R. Jacobson 2006. Seroprevalence of *Mycoplasma agassizii* and tortoise herpesvirus in captive desert tortoises (*Gopherus agassizii*) from the Greater Barstow Area, Mojave Desert, California. *Journal of Arid Environments* 67:192-201. Supplement.
- Keith, K., and K.H. Berry. 2005. Surveys for Desert Tortoises in the El Mirage Off-Highway Vehicle Recreation Area, San Bernardino County, California. Final Report from the U.S. Geological Survey, Moreno Valley, California, to the U.S. Bureau of Land Management, Moreno Valley and Sacramento, California. 37 pp.
- Keith, K., K.H. Berry, and J.F. Weigand. 2008. When desert tortoises are rare: Testing a new protocol for assessing status. *California Fish and Game* 94:75-97.
- Kristan III, W.B., and W.I. Boarman. 2003. Spatial pattern of risk of common raven predation on desert tortoises. *Ecology* 84:2432-2443.
- Mendenhall, W. C. 1909. 30 Desert Watering Places in Southeastern California and Southwestern Nevada. U.S. Geological Survey Water Supply Paper 224.

- Merriam, C. H. (ed.). 1893. The Death Valley Expedition. Part II. North American Fauna No. 7. Washington, D.C.: U. S. Government Printing Office. 393 pp.
- National Register of Historic Places. 2000. Blackwater Well, aka Blackwater Well Archeological District. San Bernardino County (#00001326), California.
- Oftedal, O.T. 2002. Nutritional ecology of the desert tortoise in the Mohave and Sonoran deserts. Pages 194-241 in Van Devender, T.R. (ed.), The Sonoran Desert Tortoise: Natural History, Biology, and Conservation. University of Arizona Press and Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum, Tucson.
- Palmer, T.S. 1891. Diary for Dec. 11, 1890-May 25, 1891 of the Death Valley Expedition. Henry E. Huntington Library,
- Schumacher, I.M., M.B. Brown, E.R. Jacobson, B.R. Collins, and P.A. Klein. 1993. Detection of antibodies to a pathogenic mycoplasma in desert tortoises (*Gopherus agassizii*) with upper respiratory tract disease. *Journal of Clinical Microbiology* 31:1454-1460.
- Spears, J. R. 1892. Illustrated Sketches of Death Valley and other Borax Deserts of the Pacific Coast. Rand, McNally and Co., Publishers. Chicago and New York. 226 pp.
- Starry, R. M. 1974. Gold Gamble. Maturango Museum Publication 7. China Lake, California. 162 pp.
- Surveyor General of California. 1857. Britton and Rey's Map of the State of California. Montgomery St. Cor. Commercial, San Francisco.
- Thompson, D. G. 1921. Routes to desert watering places in the Mohave Desert Region, California. U.S. Geological Survey Water Supply Paper 490-B.
- U.S. Bureau of Land Management. 1980, as amended. The California Desert Conservation Area Plan, 1980. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management, Sacramento, California. 173 pp.
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 1994. The Desert Tortoise (Mojave Population) Recovery Plan. U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Portland, Oregon. 73 pp and appendices.
- Weight, H. O. 1955. Twenty mule team days in Death Valley. Southwest Panorama Number Three. The Calico Press. Twentynine Palms, California. 44 pp (?)
- Wendland, L., L.A. Zacher, P.A. Klein, D.R. Brown, D. Demcovitz, R. Littell, and M.B. Brown. 2007. Improved Enzyme-Linked Immunosorbent Assay to reveal *Mycoplasma agassizii* exposure: A valuable tool in the management of environmentally sensitive tortoise populations. *Clinical and Vaccine Immunology* 14:1190-1195.
- Wheeler, G. M. 1879. 1871-1879 Atlas Map of the U. S. Geographical Surveys West of the 100th Meridian, Sheet Map. Accompanies the Annual Report of Lt. George M. Wheeler, Corp of Engineers, U. S. Army.

Whitley, D. S. 1999. National Register of Historic Places Registration Form – Blackwater Well. Prepared for Bureau of Land Management. Bureau of Land Management, Ridgecrest Field Office, Ridgecrest, California.

Table 1. A summary of tortoise sign found during preliminary surveys of 45 plots sampled during 2009. All sign includes live tortoises as well as other sign.

Plot no.	Transect distance (km)	All sign/km	Live tortoises/km	Number of tortoises and tortoise sign					
				Live	Dead	Active burrows	Inactive burrows	Scats	Other
1	11	3.909	0.000	0	0	1	6	36	0
2	11	2.273	0.000	0	0	0	12	13	0
3	8.7	2.184	0.114	1	4	1	11	2	0
4	11	2.818	0.000	0	2	1	12	16	0
5	11	1.273	0.000	0	1	0	6	7	0
6	6.4	0.000	0.000	0	0	0	0	0	0
7	6.4	0.000	0.000	0	0	0	0	0	0
8	11.0	0.546	0.000	0	4	0	2	0	0
9	11.7	1.795	0.171	2	3	2	7	7	0
10	11	1.909	0.091	1	0	2	13	5	0
12	11	4.091	0.091	1	2	3	25	12	2
13	11.0	0.364	0.000	0	3	1	0	0	0
14	11	0.182	0.000	0	1	0	1	0	0
16	11	0.273	0.000	0	2	0	1	0	0
17	10.1	0.198	0.000	0	2	0	0	0	0
18	11	1.000	0.091	1	0	0	5	5	0
19	11	0.455	0.000	0	2	1	1	1	0
20	11	2.818	0.091	1	3	3	12	11	0
21	11	3.000	0.182	2	5	2	11	13	0
22	8.7	0.804	0.000	0	1	1	2	3	0
23	11	0.636	0.000	0	1	2	2	2	0
24	8.7	0.920	0.000	0	3	3	1	1	0
25	11.0	0.727	0.091	1	0	1	0	5	1
26	11.0	1.091	0.091	1	1	4	4	2	0
27	8.7	0.460	0.000	0	3	0	0	1	0
28	7.3	0.411	0.000	0	2	0	1	0	0
29	8.7	0.345	0.000	0	3	0	0	0	0
30	11	0.000	0.000	0	0	0	0	0	0
32	11	0.636	0.000	0	1	1	4	1	0
33	11	0.364	0.000	0	2	0	2	0	0
34	11	0.273	0.000	0	1	0	2	0	0
35	11	0.182	0.000	0	2	0	0	0	0
36	6.4	0.469	0.000	0	2	0	1	0	0
37	8.7	0.345	0.000	0	0	0	1	2	0
38	8.7	0.115	0.000	0	1	0	0	0	0

Table 1, continued. A summary of tortoise sign found during preliminary surveys of 45 plots sampled during 2009. All sign includes live tortoises as well as other sign.

Plot no.	Transect distance (km)	All sign/km	Live tortoises/km	Number of tortoises and tortoise sign					
				Live	Dead	Active burrows	Inactive burrows	Scats	Other
39	8.7	0.229	0.000	0	1	0	1	0	0
40	6.4	0.469	0.000	0	1	0	1	1	0
41	8.7	0.000	0.000	0	0	0	0	0	0
44	8.7	0.345	0.000	0	0	0	2	1	0
45	8.7	0.000	0.000	0	0	0	0	0	0
47	5.3	0.755	0.000	0	0	0	0	4	0
61	8.7	0.000	0.000	0	0	0	0	0	0
62	8.7	0.345	0.000	0	0	0	1	2	0
63	6.4	0.313	0.000	0	0	0	1	1	0
64	10.5	0.095	0.000	0	0	0	1	0	0
Totals	432	0.947	0.026	11	59	29	152	154	4

Table 2. A summary of predators and predator sign by plot for surveys undertaken in 2009

Plot no.	Transect (km)	Sign/km	Total sign	Number of predators or predator sign					Other sign, not included in counts: digs, howling coyotes, and barking dogs
				Ravens	Live canid/felid	Canid scats	Canid dens	Sign concentration areas	
1	11	2.45	27	0	0	20	0	0	7 bobcat scats
2	11	1.45	16	0	0	13	0	2	Also: 1 domestic dog scat
3	8.7	1.26	11	0	0	9	0	2	2 sign concentration areas are bobcat
4	11	2.54	28	4	0	18	0	3	Also: 3 domestic dog scats
5	11	2.00	22	0	0	12	1	6	Also: 3 domestic dog scats
6	6.40	0.94	6	0	0	6	0	0	approximately 10 canid digs, dogs barking, dogs living at nearby home
7	6.40	7.97	51	20	1	~30	0	0	dog kennels nearby (>100 dogs); >6 domestic dog scats; 6 canid dig sites; considerable dog scat along roads and fenceline
8	8.7	3.22	28	0	0	28	0	0	> 40 digs; several coyotes howling just north of plot
9	11.70	1.71	20	0	0	15	0	5	~35 canid dig sites
10	11	0.36	4	0	0	3	0	1	
12	11	1.09	17	0	0	13	1	31	
13	8.7	1.37	12	0	0	7	5	0	>50 canid dig sites
14	11	0.636	7	0	0	5	0	2	
16	8.7	1.72	15	0	0	14	0	1	>50 canid dig sites
17	8.7	1.03	9	0	0	7	0	2	>50 canid dig sites
18	8.7	1.38	12	0	0	6	0	6	~ 55 canid dig sites
19	8.7	1.15	10	0	0	9	0	1	~ 35 canid dig sites
20	8.7	1.26	11	0	0	8	3	0	>50 canid dig sites
21	8.7	1.15	10	0	0	10	0	0	>45 canid dig sites; coyotes calling
22	8.7	0.69	6	0	0	6	0	0	Also, 1 domestic dog scat, far from dirt road

Table 2, continued. A summary of predators and predator sign for plots surveyed in 2009

Plot no.	Transect (km)	Sign/km	Total sign	Ravens	Live canid/felid	Number of predators or predator sign					Other sign, not included in counts: digs, howling coyotes, and barking dogs
						Canid scats	Canid dens	Sign concentration area	Canid dens	Sign concentration area	
23	11.0	1.64	18	2	0	10	1	5			
24	8.70	1.61	14	0	0	12	0	2			>60 canid dig sites and mine shaft with 1 barn owl and 2 eggs
25	8.70	1.38	12	0	0	12	0	0			> 50 canid dig sites
26	8.70	1.49	13	0	0	13	0	0			>50 canid dig sites
27	8.70	2.18	19	0	0	3	16	0			~8 digs, prints of domestic dogs
28	7.30	0.82	6	1	0	3	0	2			~15 canid dig sites; coyotes howling
29	8.70	1.38	12	0	0	9	0	3			~ 50 canid dig sites and 1 falcon w/nest
30	8.70	0.80	7	0	0	5	2	0			~ 40 canid dig sites
32	8.70	0.23	2	0	0	2	0	0			> 50 canid dig sites
33	8.70	1.61	14	1	0	10	0	3			~ 50 canid dig sites
34	8.70	2.18	19	0	0	14	0	5			> 50 canid dig sites
35	8.70	2.76	24	0	0	17	0	7			~50 canid dig sites and kit fox tracks
36	6.40	0.47	3	0	0	3	0	0			~70 canid dig sites, remains of 1 jack rabbit
37	8.70	0.34	3	0	0	3	0	0			6 canid dig sites
38	8.70	0.34	3	0	0	3	0	0			37 canid dig sites
39	8.70	1.49	13	0	0	11	1	1			56 canid dig sites
40	6.40	1.88	12	0	0	11	0	1			~45 canid dig sites and 1 bobcat den with kittens
41	8.70	0.69	6	0	0	4	0	2			~40 canid dig sites
44	8.70	1.15	10	1	0	6	0	3			1 inactive raven/raptor nest site in Joshua tree; ~40 canid dig sites
45	8.70	1.72	15	0	0	15	0	0			26 canid dig sites

Plot no.	Transect (km)	Sign/km	Total sign	Ravens	Live canid/felid	Canid scats	Canid dens	Number of predators or predator sign		
								Sign concentration areas	Other sign, not included in counts: digs, howling coyotes, and barking dogs	
47	5.3	1.32	7	0	0	6	0	1	~20	canid dig sites
61	8.70	1.26	11	0	0	10	0	1	many	canid tracks; ~24 dig sites
62	8.70	1.03	9	0	0	8	0	1	>24	canid dig sites
63	6.40	0.63	4	0	0	4	0	0	>50	canid dig sites
64	8.7	1.26	11	1	0	10	0	0	>50	canid dig sites

Table 3. 2009, Suitability of plots as tortoise habitat: a summary of vegetation notes relevant to potential translocation of desert tortoise.

Plot No.	Dominant and common shrubs	Quality of vegetation; initial notes on limitations or problems
1	Joshua trees (<i>Yucca brevifolia</i>) are sparse; burro bush is dominant in numbers; other common shrubs include creosote bush, goldenhead (<i>Acamptopappus sphaerocephalus</i>), big galleta grass (<i>Pleuraphis rigida</i>), winterfat (<i>Krascheninnikovia lanata</i>) and California scale broom (<i>Lepidospartum squamatum</i>).	Good. Perennial plants (24 spp.) moderately diverse. <i>Brassica</i> spp. and <i>Bromus</i> spp. are common, <i>Amsinckia</i> is ubiquitous outside of washes. Wash vegetation: California scale broom, rabbit brush (<i>Ericameria nauseosa</i>), and matchweed (<i>Gutierrezia</i> spp.)
2	The common perennial plants are big galleta grass, burrobush, creosote bush, peach thorn (<i>Lycium cooperi</i>), and winterfat. Joshua trees are rare.	Good. Perennial plants (19 spp.) moderately diverse. <i>Brassica</i> spp. are common.
3	The common perennial plants are burro bush, creosote bush, peach thorn, big galleta grass, peach thorn, and shadscale (<i>Atriplex confertifolia</i>). Joshua trees are sparse.	Fair to poor. Perennial plants (33 spp.) are diverse, including paperbag bush (<i>Salazaria mexicana</i>), desert straw (<i>Stephanomeria pauciflora</i>), matchweed, and California scale broom in washes. <i>Brassica</i> spp. are rare.
4	Burrobush is the dominant shrub. Other common plants include big galleta grass, creosote bush, peach thorn, and cheese bush (<i>Hymenoclea salsola</i>). Joshua trees and Mojave yuccas (<i>Yucca schidigera</i>) are rare.	Good. Perennial plants (25 spp.) are present. <i>Bromus</i> spp are common; <i>Brassica</i> spp. are sparse. Three washes dominated by California scale broom, rabbit brush, and cheese bush.
5	Common perennial plants include: big galleta grass, burrobush, creosote bush, cheese bush, and goldenhead. Joshua trees are rare..	Fair to good. Cover of perennial plants (18 spp.) is sparse. History of cattle grazing may have affected quality and composition of vegetation.
6	Allscale (<i>Atriplex polycarpa</i>) is dominant, other shrubs include: burro bush, cheese bush, and creosote bush. Russian thistle is also common.	Very poor. 16 spp. of perennial plants noted. Habitat quality is extremely poor due to grazing and fires. Plot adjacent to old agricultural field and residence; boundary lies between graded dirt road and tumbleweed (<i>Salsola</i> spp.)-piled private property fence. Few shrubs present; allscale is indicative of alkaline soils and/or disturbance, cheese bush is associated with disturbed sites.
7	Allscale is the predominant species, followed by four-wing saltbush (<i>Atriplex canescens</i>), peach thorn, burrobush, and shadscale.	Poor. The plot lies on uniform valley floor and has few shrubs (8 spp.). <i>Shismus</i> spp. inhabits the inter-shrub space. Evidence of intense past livestock grazing is pervasive. Habitat unsuitable for translocation.
8	Cheesebush is dominant; other common shrubs include Cooper's goldenbush, spiny hopsage (<i>Grayia spinosa</i>), creosote bush, turpentine bush (<i>Thamnosma montana</i>), and Mojave horsebrush. (<i>Tetradymia stenolepis</i>)	Fair to Good. Joshua trees are relatively numerous though not common. 24 spp. of shrubs present. Cheese bush and Cooper's golden bush are indicators of past livestock grazing pressure. Cheese bush is also associated with disturbed sites.
9	Burro bush is the dominant shrub; other common shrubs include creosote bush, indigo bush (<i>Psorothamnus arborescens</i> , <i>P. fremontii</i>) cheese bush, and winterfat. Joshua trees present but sparse.	Good; 31 spp. of perennial shrubs, cacti, and grass. Vegetation is diverse and healthy looking. Cheese bush is a pioneer species and is often associated with disturbed sites.
10	Burro bush is dominant; other common shrubs include creosote bush, cheese bush, shadscale, and Mojave woody aster (<i>Xylorhiza tortifolia</i>).	Good. <i>Brassica</i> spp. are present; <i>Bromus</i> spp are common. Perennial plants, 28 spp. noted. Joshua trees are rare.

Table 3, continued: 2009, Suitability of plots as tortoise habitat: a summary of vegetation notes relevant to potential translocation of desert tortoise.

Plot No.	Dominant and common shrubs	Quality of vegetation; initial notes on limitations or problems
12	Creosote bush is the dominant shrub. Other common shrubs are burrobrush, shadscale, peach thorn and paper bag bush are more common in washes. Joshua trees are present but rare.	Good. <i>Brassica</i> spp. are sparse. Perennial plants—21 species noted. The presence of saltbush is indicative of alkaline soils.
13	Vegetation is almost exclusively allscale saltbush. Burrobrush is present but much less abundant, followed by sparsely distributed winter fat, cheesebush and <i>Tetradymia</i>	Poor. Vegetation is almost a monoculture of allscale, indicative of alkaline soils and/or disturbance (12 spp. of perennial plants present). The plot supports few other shrubs and is poor quality habitat for tortoise.
14	Burrobrush and creosote bush are by far the most common shrubs across the plot, followed by allscale, spiny hopsage, and cheese bush (washes). Three species of salt bush are present; allscale dominates the SW quarter of the plot	Fair to good. 14 spp. of perennial plants are present. Few shrubs in the intershrub spaces between creosote bush and burro bush with the exception of alien annual plants.
16	Creosote bush is the dominant shrub; other common shrubs include burrobrush, spiny hopsage, cheese bush, and peach thorn. Joshua trees are present and sparse.	Good to Fair. 29 spp. perennial plants. The south and east ends of the plot have diverse and closely spaced vegetation; the north and west portions have decreased diversity and increased spacing between shrubs.
17	Creosote bush is dominant; other common shrubs include burro bush, spiny hopsage, winterfat, goldenhead, and Nevada joint fir. Joshua trees sparsely distributed.	Good. 24 spp. of perennial plants. Large Joshua trees and fairly dense vegetation characterize the southern end of the plot. In the north, vegetation is more widely spaced.
18	Burro bush is dominant; other common shrubs include spiny hopsage, creosote bush, goldenhead and winterfat. Joshua trees present but sparse.	Good. 28 spp. of perennial plants. Shrub mixture is fairly diverse and varies throughout the plot. The plot appears to be a promising relocation spot.
19	Creosote bush is dominant; other common shrubs include burro bush, cheese bush, Cooper's golden bush, and turpentine bush. Joshua trees are present but sparse.	Good. 31 spp of perennial plants. A variety of terrain supports diverse vegetation. The presence of Cooper's golden bush indicates past livestock grazing pressure. Cheese bush is also a pioneer species associated with disturbed sites.
20	Burrobrush and creosote bush are co-dominants across the plot; allscale also common. One or 2 Joshua trees on the plot.	Fair to Poor. 20 spp. of perennial plants. Vegetation in wash and in SE corner is diverse and healthy. In all other areas, shrubs are widely spaced.
21	Burrobrush is the dominant shrub; common shrubs include creosote bush, turpentine bush, cheese bush, and paper bag bush. Joshua trees and Mojave yuccas rare.	Good to excellent. 28 spp. of perennial shrubs, cacti, and grasses. Cheese bush is a pioneer species often associated with disturbed sites.
22	Burrobrush and creosote bush are common shrubs, followed by allscale, indigo bush, cheese bush, and shadscale. Joshua trees are rare.	Fair to good. 27 spp. of perennial plants. Some significant washes with <i>Brickellia incana</i> , California scalebroom, sandpaper plant (<i>Petalonyx thurberi</i>).

Table 3, continued: 2009, Suitability of plots as tortoise habitat: a summary of vegetation notes relevant to potential translocation of desert tortoise.

Plot No.	Dominant and common shrubs	Quality of vegetation; initial notes on limitations or problems
23	Burro bush and creosote bush are the more common shrubs, followed by Anderson thornbush (<i>Lycium andersonii</i>), indigo bush, and goldenhead.	Good. 12 spp. of perennial plants are present.
24	Creosote bush is dominant; other common shrubs include burro bush, cheese bush, allscale and shadscale. Joshua trees and Mojave yuccas are present but sparse.	Fair to poor. 26 spp. perennial shrubs, cacti, and grasses. The plot has substantial historic disturbance from mining, bulldozing, and human habitation. Allscale and cheese bush, pioneer species often associated with disturbed sites, may be indicators of historic disturbances.
25	Burro bush is the dominant shrub; common shrubs include cheese bush, creosote bush, spiny hopsage, and winterfat. Joshua trees present but rare	Poor to fair. 30 spp. of perennial plants are present. The bajada to the north is rocky and vegetated almost exclusively by creosote bush. To S and E, valley floor has poor habitat with low, sparse, and stunted shrubs. The N and W portions support a mix of vegetation and appeared to be better habitat.
26	Creosote bush is dominant; common shrubs include burro bush, cheese bush, Nevada joint fir (<i>Ephedra nevadensis</i>), and California buckwheat (<i>Eriogonum fasciculatum</i>).	Good to Fair. 28 spp. of perennial plants. Cheese bush is a pioneer species often associated with disturbed sites.
27	Burro bush is the dominant shrub; common shrubs include creosote bush, cheese bush, indigo bush, and allscale. Joshua trees present and rare.	Good; 29 spp. of perennial plants. This plot has a good mix of suitable soils and a variety of vegetation.
28	Creosote bush is dominant; common shrubs include: burro bush, cheese bush, allscale, and Nevada joint fir. Joshua trees are present but rare.	Poor. 32 spp. of perennial plants are present. Poor terrain with limited sites for tortoise burrows. The presence of saltbush is indicative of alkaline soils on at least part of the plot.
29	Creosote bush is dominant; common shrubs include burro bush, cheese bush, allscale, and Nevada joint fir.	Poor. 39 spp. of perennial plants are present. The SE part of plot is steep, very rocky, and apparently not suitable for use by tortoises. The rest would, at best, be low density habitat. The best habitat available on this plot is highly impacted by OHV use.
30	Creosote bush and burro bush are co-dominant; less common are cheese bush, Anderson thorn bush, and peach thorn. Joshua trees and Mojave yucca are present but sparse	Fair to Poor. 21 spp. perennial plants present. Vegetation on >90% of plot consists of widely spaced creosote bush with few to no shrubs between. Vegetation between shrubs is almost exclusively <i>Erodium</i> , <i>Schismus</i> and <i>Amsinckia</i> .

Table 3, continued: 2009, Suitability of plots as tortoise habitat: a summary of vegetation notes relevant to potential translocation of desert tortoise.

Plot No.	Dominant and common shrubs	Quality of vegetation; initial notes on limitations or problems
32	Creosote bush is dominant; common shrubs include burro bush, cheese bush, turpentine bush, and Mojave horse brush. Mojave yucca and Joshua trees are present but rare.	Fair to Good. 32 spp. of perennial plants present. Vegetation is creosote bush and a mix of other shrubs. S plot: widely spaced creosote bush and other shrubs are sparse to rare. N plot: poor habitat. Cheese bush is a pioneer species often associated with disturbed sites.
33	Creosote bush is dominant; common shrubs include burro bush, cheese bush, turpentine bush and Nevada joint fir. Mojave yucca is sparse, Joshua trees are rare.	Good. 29 spp. perennial plants; cheese bush is a pioneer species often associated with disturbed sites.
34	Creosote bush is dominant shrub; common shrubs include: burro bush, cheese bush, Nevada joint fir, and indigobush. Joshua trees and Mojave yucca are present and rare.	Good. 25 spp. perennial plants; cheese bush is a pioneer species often associated with washes and human-related disturbed lands.
35	Creosote bush is dominant; common shrubs burro bush, cheese bush, turpentine bush, and Nevada joint fir. Joshua trees are present but rare.	Good to fair. 28 spp. of perennial plants. Cheese bush was the third most common shrub and is a pioneer species associated with washes and disturbed sites.
36	Allscale saltbush is dominant shrub; common shrubs include shadscale, apricot mallow, cheese bush, and Anderson thorn bush.	Fair to Poor. 27 spp. of perennial plants. Most of plot, except central areas, lacks suitable habitat. Saltbush species and proximity to Superior Lake playa are indicative of alkaline soil. The interior of the plot appears to be more suitable.
37	Creosote bush is dominant; common shrubs include spiny hopsage, Cooper's goldenbush, turpentine bush, and Nevada joint fir. Joshua trees present but sparse	Fair. 26 spp. perennial plants. About half the plot supports a variety of perennial shrubs with the other half supporting more open and sparse vegetation. The presence of Cooper's golden bush and cheese bush indicates past disturbance, e.g., livestock.
38	Creosote bush is dominant; common shrubs include spiny hopsage, Cooper's goldenbush, burro bush, and Anderson thornbush. Joshua trees are present but sparse.	Fair to poor. 28 spp. of perennial plants. The presence of Cooper's golden bush is indicative of past livestock grazing pressure.
39	Creosote bush is dominant; common plants include Cooper's goldenbush, burro bush, Anderson's thornbush, and spiny hopsage.	Fair to poor. 25 spp. of perennial plants. The presence of Cooper's golden bush is indicative of past livestock grazing pressure.
40	Allscale saltbush is the dominant shrub; other common shrubs are Anderson's thorn bush, spiny hopsage, winterfat, and burro bush.	Poor. 26 spp. of perennial plants. Plot consists of low valley floor with sparse, low vegetation Saltbush is dominant on part of plot, indicating the existence of alkaline soils. The north end appears to be contiguous with more productive habitat north of the plot.

Table 3, continued: 2009, Suitability of plots as tortoise habitat: a summary of vegetation notes relevant to potential translocation of desert tortoise.

Plot No.	Dominant and common shrubs	Quality of vegetation; initial notes on limitations or problems
41	Creosote bush is the dominant shrub; common shrubs include Nevada joint fir, Cooper's goldenbush, Anderson's thornbush, and turpentine bush. Joshua trees are rare.	Fair. 23 spp of perennial shrubs and grasses. Cooper's golden bush and cheese bush are indicative of past livestock grazing pressure.
44	Creosote bush is dominant overall; other common plants include burro bush, cheese bush, Cooper's goldenbush, and Nevada joint fir.	Good to fair. 30 spp. of perennial plants. This plot consists of low hills, bajada, and valley floor, with a diverse plant assemblage. Cooper's golden bush and cheese bush indicate past livestock grazing pressure.
45	Creosote bush is the dominant shrub; common shrubs are turpentine bush, Cooper's goldenbush, burro bush, and California buckwheat.	Good to Fair. 29 spp of perennial plants. The presence of Cooper's golden bush indicates possible past livestock grazing pressure.
47	Allscale saltbush is the dominant shrub; common plants are shadscale, Anderson's thornbush, apricot mallow, and desert alyssum.	Very poor. 14 spp. of perennial plants. The majority of the plot is bare playa. The saltbush species are indicative of alkaline soils.
61	Creosote bush is dominant; common plants include burro bush, Cooper's goldenbush, cheese bush, and blackbrush. Joshua trees present and rare.	Good to Fair. 27 spp. of perennial plants. Cooper's golden bush and cheese bush are often indicative of past livestock grazing pressure. Matchweed also present.
62	Creosote bush is dominant; common plants include burro bush, Cooper's goldenbush, Anderson's thornbush and spiny hopsage. Joshua trees are present and rare.	Good to Fair. 27 spp of perennial plants. Cooper's golden bush and cheese bush, common indicators of past livestock grazing pressure, are common.
63	Creosote bush is dominant; common plants include burro bush, cheese bush, Mojave aster, and Anderson thorn bush.	Good to Fair. 17 spp. The indicators of substantial historical grazing are present, e.g., cheese bush.
64	Creosote bush is dominant; common plants include: burro bush, Cooper's goldenbush, cheese bush, and spiny hopsage. Joshua trees are present but sparse.	Good to Fair. 26 spp. on uniform valley floor. The presence of Cooper's golden bush and cheese bush are indicators of past livestock grazing pressure.

Table 4. Suitability of plots as tortoise habitat: topography and surficial geology.

Plot No.	Elevations (m)	Topography: % of plot suitable for tortoises	Surficial geology: % of soils and soil surfaces suitable for easy to moderate		Notes on topography and suitability of soils for walking and digging burrows
			Walking	Digging	
1	725-774	98	100	100	The topography on 86% of the plot is alluvial fan; soils suitable for digging are on 100%. There are three significant washes and two areas with steep banked canyons (2% steep canyon walls, unsuitable for tortoises).
2	664-689	98	100	100	This plot is composed of 95% gently sloping alluvial fan with 3% large wash and 2% washlets.
3	884-946	50	55	75	This plot has varied topography including rolling hills, badlands, washes, and alluvial fan with soils suitable for digging. About 45% of the plot is unsuitable for tortoises to walk due to steep or rocky surfaces and 25% is unsuitable for digging burrows
4	738-780	98	98	100	Topography includes gently sloping alluvial fan and several washes with soils suitable throughout for burrows. About 2% is unsuitable for walking due to steep wash banks.
5	677-719	100	100	100	Topography includes gently sloping alluvial fan and several washes. Soil is suitable for burrows. About 1% of the plot has steep banks on washes, presenting minor obstacles.
6	640-792	96	96	96	Valley floor, uniform and almost flat, except the northeast corner, which is part of the Black Mtn Wilderness Area (a steep volcanic field). 4% too steep and rocky for walking and would not support burrows.
7	622-628	100	100	100	Valley floor: 100% suitable for walking or digging.
8	1085-1158	100	100	98	90% alluvial fan and 10% low rolling hills. Easy to moderate walking and digging; only 1% not suitable for digging.
9	1036-1092	30	100	30	90% low rocky slopes, moderate difficulty for walking; 60% rocky soil –moderate to difficult digging; 10% unsuitable for digging
10	604-689	100	98	100	2% steep rocky surface. The topography is primarily alluvial fan with low hills and several washes and washlets draining through the bajada. Soil is suitable for burrows. Only 2% has steep, rocky surfaces, difficult for walking.
12	768-829	100	100	100	This plot consists of gently sloping bajada with several washes. Soil is suitable for burrows.
13	625-671	100	100	100	Valley floor; soils sandy to clay-loam; 5% is a low unvegetated area.
14	655-695	100	100	100	The topography is alluvial fan ~12% in large and small washes. Soils are suitable for burrow construction and surficial geology is suitable for easy walking.

Table 4, continued. Suitability of plots as tortoise habitat: topography and surficial geology.

Plot No.	Elevations (m)	Topography: % of plot suitable for tortoises	Surficial geology: % of soils and soil surfaces suitable for		Notes on topography and suitability of soils for walking and digging burrows
			Walking moderate	Digging	
16	1055-1156	97	96	95	40% alluvial fan, 57% gentle and rolling hills, and 3% very steep.
17	1030-1091	100	100	99	Primarily alluvial fan, valley floor; < 1% unsuitable for digging burrows
18	1067-1097	100	100	99	Alluvial fan/valley floor; < 1% unsuitable for digging burrows
19	1006-1177	75	85	75	10% steep slopes, 5% cliffs; 15% very rocky surfaces, unsuitable for digging burrows and very difficult for walking
20	811-853	98	98	98	Primarily valley floor with large washes; 2% volcanic field; 2% very rocky surface, unsuitable for digging burrows
21	914-945	90	90	90	90% is alluvial fan/valley floor with washes; 10% very rocky surface difficult for walking and unsuitable for digging burrows
22	747-884	97	97	97	3% large boulders; The topography on 97% of plot is alluvial fan and rolling hills suitable for walking and digging. Washes are present (12%); 3% is too steep with large volcanic boulders (unsuitable for tortoises).
23	713-786	100	100	100	The topography is 96% alluvial fan with rolling hills and small washes; soils are suitable for walking and digging.
24	1030-1168	80	92	80	Primarily alluvial fan and valley floor, low hills; 5% steep cliffs; 8% rocky, difficult for walking; 20% unsuitable for digging burrows
25	1030-1109	80	100	80	20% soil with gravel and cobbles present moderate to difficult for digging burrows
26	908-1036	85	99	85	Almost entirely low, rolling hills with minor obstacles; 1% volcanic field-difficult for walking; 15% unsuitable for digging burrows
27	835-920	70	70	90	Mixed habitat: alluvial fan, rolling hills, large and small washes: 30% very rocky surface, difficult for walking, 10% unsuitable for digging burrows
28	872-975	25	25	25	75% steep, deeply ridged "badlands" with rocky surface difficult to walk and unsuitable for digging burrows
29	884-945	75	85	65	15% volcanic field, rocky and very difficult to walk; 85% low hills with large ash deposits and minor obstacles for walking; 35% unsuitable for digging burrows
30	985-1018	100	95	98	95% alluvial fan, 5% rolling hills. 5% minor obstacles for walking; 2% unsuitable for digging burrows

Table 4, continued. Suitability of plots as tortoise habitat: topography and surficial geology

Plot No.	Elevations (m)	Topography: % of plot suitable for tortoises	Surficial geology: % of soils and soil surfaces suitable for		Notes on topography and suitability of soils for walking and digging burrows
			Walking	Digging	
32	1036-1177	~50	90	20	Primarily alluvial fan and rolling hills; 10% with large boulders or steep slopes making walking difficult; 70% with minor obstacles for walking; 70% gravely to rocky loam, moderate to difficult digging; 10% unsuitable for digging burrows
33	1140-1195	90	99	90	Rolling hills (low) with occasional large boulders (1%); 1% difficult for walking; 10% unsuitable for digging burrows
34	969-1006	~80	100	65	100% low rolling hills and small washes. 98% low hills with minor obstacles for walking; 30% soil has gravel/cobble and poses moderate difficulty for digging; 5% unsuitable for digging burrows
35	945-1022	~90	100	90	65% low hills, 20% large washes and 15% alluvial fan; 65% with minor obstacles for walking; 10% unsuitable for digging burrows
36	914-924	75	75		2% associated with playa and old lake beds; 23% gravel/cobble desert pavement minor obstacles for walking; 25% unsuitable for digging burrows
37	969-1027	100	100	100	50% low rolling hills, 50% valley/alluvial fan
38	1006-1157	80	80	90	80% rolling hills and alluvial fans; 18% boulders or steep cliffs; 20% steep rocky cliffs or rocky surface very difficult for walking; 10% unsuitable for digging burrows
39	945-997	75	75	95	Primarily valley/alluvial fan and rolling hills with 10% rocky hills; 25% rocky surface very difficult for walking; 5% unsuitable for digging burrows
40	945-945	99	99	99	Primarily alluvial fan and rolling hills; 1% associated with small playas; 1% rocky –navigable but unsuitable for digging burrows
41	1036-1061	95	95	95	Primarily alluvial fan and rolling hills; 5% rocky areas pose moderate difficulty for walking; 5% unsuitable for digging burrows
44	1006-1067	90	90	90	Predominantly alluvial fan with rolling hills and washlets; 10% hills with minor obstacles for walking; 10% unsuitable for digging burrows
45	1024-1109	70	70	90	90% of plot is valley and alluvial fan, 10% is steep cliffs; 30% steep and/or rocky surface very difficult for walking; 10% unsuitable for digging burrows
47	917-917	<33	100	67	67% of plot is playa; remaining is valley floor. While the soils and surface are suitable for digging and walking, tortoises do not construct burrows in playas
61	1055-1122	96	96	98	Primarily alluvial fan with 4% rolling hills and 1% washlets; 4% hills with rocks –difficult for walking; 2% unsuitable for digging burrows

Table 4, continued. Suitability of plots as tortoise habitat: topography and surficial geology

Plot No.	Elevations (m)	Topography: % of plot suitable for tortoises	Surficial geology: % of soils and soil surfaces suitable for easy to moderate		Notes on topography and suitability of soils for walking and digging burrows
			Walking	Digging	
62	1018-1205	70	80	70	85% of plot is alluvial fan and low rolling hills with washlets. 15% steep cliffs; 20% steep and/or rocky surface very difficult for walking; 30% unsuitable for digging burrows
63	939-1000	100	100	100	Uniform alluvial fan with a few small washes (1%); overall easy digging; occasional small boulders present
64	1067-1189	100	100	100	Alluvial fan with 1% rolling hills; gentle slopes and good digging

Table 5. A summary of anthropogenic impacts recorded on transects from 45 one-square mile plots in the Western Expansion Translocation Area, in 2009. All sign counts have been converted to sign per kilometer of transect.

Types of anthropogenic impacts	Number of impacts/km of plot by plot identification number									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Cattle scat	2.09	4.27	1.84	7.09	8.00	37.97	111.41	0.57	0.00	0.64
General garbage	4.64	46.18	0.23	2.27	19.90	10.16	22.50	3.33	5.75	12.27
Balloons	0.82	0.82	0.46	0.73	0.82	0.31	0.47	0.69	0.69	0.82
Firearm casings/targets	0.27	0.00	0.11	0.09	11.82	1.25	0.31	1.15	0.46	1.09
People or footprints	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.26	0.00
Paved roads	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Dirt roads	0.00	1.18	0.69	0.00	1.82	1.25	0.78	1.61	1.84	1.18
Recent vehicle tracks	0.55	1.00	1.83	0.55	2.09	4.22	0.00	0.00	0.34	1.73
Old vehicle tracks	2.27	1.82	3.20	2.91	2.45	25.31	5.00	8.40	15.29	1.64
Motorcycle trails	0.00	0.00	0.34	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.23	1.15	0.00
Camp sites, fires	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.09	0.16	0.00	0.11	0.00	0.09
Fences	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.47	0.16	0.00	0.00	0.00
Mining	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.46	2.18
Sign of dogs	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.16	2.66	0.00	0.00	0.00
Survey markers, signs, posts, cairns	0.45	0.64	0.00	0.18	0.91	0.31	0.31	0.34	1.26	0.64
Other (see below)	OR			OR		U, W	V, W, H			D= 0.36
Total	11.09	55.91	8.70	13.82	47.9	81.57	143.60	16.43	27.50	22.64

Plot 1: 1 4-wheel drive road; close proximity to Hinkley; history of livestock grazing

Plot 2: 4.8 km of road on 3 boundaries

Plot 6: Human impacts are severe from grazing and vehicles; almost no shrubs are present. Vehicle use is high on open dirt roads and unauthorized cross-country routes; plot bordered on W by active agricultural field and ranch; old cattle watering site on plot. This is not an appropriate site to translocate tortoises.

Plot 7: Dirt roads bound 2.5 sides of the section, as well as fence on E side. One deep, unfenced hole on W boundary. Wilderness to the N. E edge of plot is adjacent to private property with agricultural fields, buildings, and dog kennels with >100 dogs. Six old cattle trails on plot; pulled up Wilderness sign.

Plot 8: pinflags, possible associated with rare plants, along N boundary.

Plot 9: Substantial evidence (craters and pits) of current and historic placer mining for gold; abandoned structures and grave N of plot. Most of plot consists of hills with rocky soils, which are light to moderately impacted by cross-country motorcycle use. People observed using the area for mining and OHV activities during survey and at other times.

Plot 10: One area denuded by vehicles, and three other denuded areas; significant general garbage near old mine excavation off plot, E edge, including old trucks, 21 tires, denuded areas.

OR = ordnance	V = vandalism
U = utility corridor	H = hazards, such as unfenced mining shafts
W = boundary with wilderness, or within wilderness	D = denuded, vehicles B = berms

Table 5. A summary of anthropogenic impacts recorded on transects from 45 one-square mile plots in the Western Expansion Translocation Area, in 2009. All sign counts have been converted to sign per kilometer of transect.

Types of anthropogenic impacts	Number of impacts/km of plot by plot identification number									
	12	13	14	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
Cattle scat, bones	0.82	0.34	0.27	0.00	0.00	0.34	0.11	1.49	0.23	0.00
General garbage	2.82	2.18	3.55	4.25	2.99	10.11	4.83	1.84	1.15	1.03
Balloons	0.73	0.57	1.09	0.23	0.46	0.69	0.46	0.69	1.15	0.46
Firearm casings/targets	0.36	0.23	3.55	0.80	0.34	0.34	1.03	0.69	0.00	1.03
People or footprints	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Paved roads	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Dirt roads	0.55	1.03	0.73	1.61	0.91	2.53	0.80	0.34	0.46	0.57
Recent vehicle tracks	1.09	3.33	1.55	0.46	0.00	0.34	1.26	0.46	0.34	0.46
Old vehicle tracks	1.73	7.7	7.91	12.64	14.71	3.22	6.89	14.25	14.71	8.28
Motorcycle trails	0.00	0.11	0.00	0.46	0.80	0.34	0.46	0.34	0.11	0.46
Camp sites, fires	0.00	0.00	0.18	0.11	0.00	0.11	0.11	0.00	0.00	0.00
Fences	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Mining	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.80	0.11	0.92	0.22	0.00	0.00	0.00
Signs of dogs	0.00	0.00	0.09	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Survey markers, signs, posts, benchmarks	0.27	0.57	0.36	0.46	0.34	0.23	0.00	0.69	0.23	0.00
Other (see below)	OR		OR	D, H,		B=0.11	S			
Total	8.37	16.06	19.28	21.82	20.66	19.28	16.17	20.79	18.38	12.29

Plot 14: ~1.3 km of 4-strand barbed wire fence parallel and inside E boundary of plot; one dirt road cuts completely through the plot and another partially cuts through the plot.

Plot 16: Human impacts are high: several roads through the plot, unauthorized cross-country motorcycle use, several mining sites and an unfenced vertical shaft, denuded areas, and one shack. Abandoned shack S of plot.

Plot 17: High-bermed and high speed Copper City Road crosses north end of plot; scrapes, old encampment outside and adjacent to north boundary; mining claims; old cross-country motorcycle tracks.

Plot 18: Old cattle watering site N of N boundary, abandoned structure several hundred meters NW of N plot corner; inhabited residence ~500 m W; moderate impacts due to small-scale mines with associated roads and trash. Abandoned dirt road and berm are present.

Plot 19: Collapsed shack with large amount of trash (in addition to tally); also 40 m E is 2 x 2 x 5 m deep shaft fenced on 3 sides; additional associated trash. Plot currently is used as camp and shooting area. A cross-country motorcycle trail following an illegal route, marked by orange flagging is present also.

Plot 22: Closed road with vehicle tracks; 4 motorcycle trails.

OR = ordnance
 B = Berms
 S = structures

D = denuded
 H = hazards, such as unfenced mining shafts

Table 5, continued. A summary of anthropogenic impacts recorded on transects from 45 one-square mile plots in the Western Expansion Translocation Area, in 2009. All sign counts have been converted to sign per kilometer of transect.

Types of anthropogenic impacts	Number of impacts/km of plot by plot identification number									
	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	32	33
Cattle scat or bones	0.00	0.00	0.11	0.00	0.00	0.41	0.34	0.00	0.00	0.00
General garbage	1.82	1.49	5.63	8.74	0.11	0.14	2.87	1.95	3.33	2.29
Balloons	1.64	0.23	0.34	0.69	0.46	0.41	0.34	0.92	0.11	0.57
Firearm casings/targets	0.82	1.49	1.38	6.09	0.57	0.41	0.57	0.69	0.23	0.69
People or footprints	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.46	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Paved roads	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Dirt roads	0.00	0.69	1.03	1.84	0.46	0.00	0.46	1.38	0.23	0.69
Recent vehicle tracks	0.00	0.80	1.26	0.69	1.15	2.05	4.71	0.46	0.11	0.00
Old vehicle tracks	3.09	11.38	13.22	8.39	1.61	10.96	15.98	14.02	2.41	5.86
Motorcycle trails	0.00	0.34	0.34	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.23	0.11	0.34
Camp sites, fires	0.00	0.34	0.57	0.23	0.11	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.11
Fences	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Mining	0.00	0.34	0.46	0.23	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.46	0.23	1.03
Signs of dogs	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.11	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Survey markers, signs, posts	0.00	1.72	0.09	0.46	0.00	0.14	0.00	0.46	0.23	0.69
Other (see legend below)	OR		S= 0.23	Cu= 0.34			V= 0.11	D= 0.80; Car; H		aban. road = 0.34
Total	7.37	18.82	24.66	27.70	5.04	14.52	25.38	21.37	6.99	12.61

Plot 24: Extensive mining activity in central part of plot: many 2-3 m trenches, craters, 2 vertical shafts, small scraped tailing piles; moderate level of cross-country motorcycle travel, several minor roads.

Plot 25: High level of human impacts-Copper City road with high berm runs through plot; also several dirt roads cross the plot; significant cross-country motorcycle use; 4 long-term camps and shooting areas, some associated with small-scale mining; debris fields and 2 collapsed structures.

Plot 26: Springs (not on topographic map), weather station, trash associated with hunters and upslope mining. Unlike other plots, all firearm casings are shotgun shells; Native American stone rings (?).

Plot 27: Heavy vehicle use on and off road, concentrations in N and W part of plot where steep hill and washes occur.

Plot 28: Most of plot is too rugged to access easily; all motorcycle tracks in largest wash.

Plot 29: Habitat includes volcanic field in Black Mountain Wilderness and semi-badland topography. Vehicle tracks primarily associated with washes; some cross-country travel too; upland game guzzler on plot; vandalism = "closed" sign hidden in shrub.

Plot 30: BLM road stake at 500588E, 3893109N (Open route 7292) is placed in area with tracks or no roads (7292 is an actual road across the plot). One ORV camp with firewood and shooting use is N of transect; apparent stolen car with belongings abandoned at 501574E, 3893471N, CA license 1LJA319. Sandy pit used at motorcycle play area. Hazard: well casing that is extremely deep.

Plot 32: Closed dirt road with motorcycle tracks (2 observations, different transects).

OR = ordnance	D = denuded
B = Berms	H = hazards, such as unfenced mining shafts
S = structures	Cu = cultural resources

Table 5, continued. A summary of anthropogenic impacts recorded on transects from 45 one-square mile plots in the Western Expansion Translocation Area, in 2009. All sign counts have been converted to sign per kilometer of transect.

Types of anthropogenic impacts	Number of impacts/km of plot by plot identification number									
	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	44	45
Cattle scat	0.92	0.11	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
General garbage	1.15	0.46	3.28	0.46	0.00	0.34	0.78	1.49	1.03	0.57
Balloons	0.34	0.46	0.63	0.11	0.34	0.11	0.47	0.69	0.34	0.23
Firearm casings/targets	0.57	0.57	1.25	0.57	0.68	0.92	1.09	0.34	2.07	0.57
People or footprints	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.46	0.00	0.00
Paved roads	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.11	0.00	0.00
Dirt roads	0.00	0.00	0.63	0.34	0.00	0.11	0.31	0.92	0.23	0.00
Recent vehicle tracks	0.00	1.15	0.47	0.34	1.03	0.57	0.00	2.41	0.00	0.23
Old vehicle tracks	5.17	8.39	1.72	0.11	0.00	2.18	0.00	28.05	1.61	0.11
Motorcycle trails	0.00	0.23	0.0	0.00	0.46	0.00	0.00	1.95	0.00	0.00
Evidence of fire/camp sites	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.11	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Fences	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Mining	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Signs of domestic dogs	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Survey markers, signs, posts	0.34	0.34	0.47	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.16	0.23	0.57	0.00
Other (see legend below)		Cu	V= 0.16					V = 0.57		
Total	8.49	11.71	8.61	2.04	2.51	4.23	2.81	37.22	5.85	1.71

Plot 36: 2 pulled up “Open Route” signs 20 m from a road, under a shrub, 490475E, 3896784N

Plot 38: 16 vehicle tires in 3 groups of 10, 3, and 3 have been bolted together and dragged to SE corner of plot, just off transect line.

Plot 41: Shrine consisting of upright motorcycle with other ORV parts scattered about; ~40 plaques commemorating deceased ORV racers, including American flag (471104E, 3897032N); 4 groups totaling 16 people visited the shrine. Vandalism: 4 red fiberglass stakes and one T-post used to designate “closed” vehicle routes had been pulled and stashed under a creosote at 471222E 3897024N.

Plot 44: Evidence of burn in SE edge of plot.

Cu = Cultural artifacts	V = vandalism
-------------------------	---------------

Table 5, continued. A summary of anthropogenic impacts recorded on transects from 45 one-square mile plots in the Western Expansion Translocation Area, in 2009. All sign counts have been converted to sign per kilometer of transect.

Types of anthropogenic Impacts	No. of impacts/km of plot by plot identification number				
	47	61	62	63	64
Cattle scat	0.00	8.85	6.21	1.41	1.15
General garbage	38.49	0.57	1.72	3.59	0.92
Balloons	1.69	0.46	0.23	0.63	0.57
Firearm casings/targets	2.26	1.61	3.22	0.63	0.92
People or footprints	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Paved roads	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Dirt roads	0.94	0.57	1.38	0.63	0.34
Recent vehicle tracks	0.38	0.00	0.46	0.00	0.92
Old vehicle tracks	5.85	2.41	1.03	0.63	2.76
Motorcycle trails	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Evidence of fire/camp sites	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Fences	0.00	0.23	0.11	0.00	0.00
Mining pits, excavation	0.00	0.00	0.46	0.16	0.46
Signs of domestic dogs	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Survey markers, signs, posts	0.38	0.00	0.57	0.00	0.00
Other			Cu= 2 sites	OR	0.57 burro scat
Total	49.99	14.70	15.39	7.68	8.61

Plot 47: Old habitation site at NE corner with substantial trash. Substantial trash also associated with roads. Occupied residence about 500 m to the N of plot. Two large trash sites with > 50 pieces each.

Plot 63: possible unexploded ordnance at UTM 466526E, 3913125N; boundary fence of NAWS is parallel to and almost adjacent to north edge of plot.

Plot 64. boundary fence of NAWS parallels northern plot boundary; walked 10 m south of fence to avoid under-representation of garbage and impacts associated with fence.

Cu = cultural artifacts	OR = ordnance
-------------------------	---------------

Table 6. A summary of tortoise sign found on 47 plots with complete coverage during 2009. Total sign includes live tortoises and all other sign.

Plot #	Transect distance (km)	Total sign/km	Live tortoises/km	Number of tortoises and tortoise sign					
				Live	Dead	Active burrows	Inactive burrows	Scats	Other
1	263.6	2.84	0.046	12	60	20	126	513	18
2	255.0	3.13	0.051	13	30	29	231	494	12
3	228.3	2.92	0.092	21	78	61	151	349	6
4	260.9	2.62	0.073	19	62	32	271	289	11
5	251.2	0.87	0.012	3	23	14	71	106	1
6	185.6	0.07	0.000	0	5	0	5	3	0
7	189.4	0.03	0.000	0	2	0	0	4	0
8	259.2	0.12	0.004	1	21	1	7	1	0
9	252.3	1.37	0.039	10	77	18	109	132	0
10	253.6	1.98	0.032	8	82	48	125	238	4
12	135.6	7.30	0.155	21	35	97	267	555	15
13	268.8	0.18	0.004	1	34	0	13	0	0
14	259.2	0.79	0.008	2	59	8	53	83	1
16	254.5	0.62	0.024	6	23	13	85	28	4
17	187.7	0.35	0.000	0	35	0	30	0	0
18	262.9	1.03	0.034	9	12	26	116	104	3
19	260.7	0.49	0.019	5	52	9	17	44	1
20	241.3	3.29	0.091	22	78	67	216	407	5
21	260.0	1.48	0.038	11	87	40	135	111	1
22	259.2	0.97	0.042	2	84	12	49	103	2
23	257.7	0.50	0.004	1	36	3	41	48	0
24	260.5	0.78	0.058	15	40	40	64	34	11
25	259.2	0.34	0.019	5	14	10	45	11	3
26	254.4	0.48	0.008	2	4	12	50	53	2
27	235.6	0.55	0.017	4	56	12	23	34	0
28	*242.4	0.43	0.000	0	72	0	12	20	0
29	235.6	0.34	0.000	0	44	0	11	22	2
30	259.0	0.04	0.000	0	5	0	4	1	0
32	256.0	0.53	0.027	7	30	13	25	60	1
33	259.2	0.23	0.008	2	19	1	18	21	0
34	261.8	0.38	0.008	2	18	5	69	5	0
35	259.9	0.17	0.000	0	30	1	10	3	0
36	252.0	1.09	0.059	15	51	30	84	89	6
37	258.6	0.19	0.008	2	6	4	28	9	1
38	251.2	0.24	0.008	2	20	8	14	16	1
39	251.2	0.79	0.039	10	9	20	80	79	1
40	260.2	0.35	0.027	7	15	18	33	15	4
41	258.3	0.02	0.000	0	1	0	4	0	0
42	260.5	0.23	0.008	2	6	4	42	2	3
44	259.2	0.30	0.012	3	13	10	45	5	3
45	260.9	0.22	0.015	4	10	9	24	7	3
46	257.0	0.34	0.027	7	15	22	31	12	0
47	78.10	0.55	0.013	1	0	6	6	30	0
61	257.7	0.03	0.000	0	0	0	9	0	0
62	259.2	0.32	0.01	5	2	11	60	6	0
63	260.00	0.85	0.019	5	1	22	144	49	1
64	233.5	0.59	0.000	0	1	3	134	1	0

* Total transect distance was estimated for plot 28 (using grand mean average of transect distances). High ridges, steep gullies, and dangerous slopes required that coverage in parts of the plot be completed by walking ridges and washes rather than standard transect lines.

Table 7. Size-age class summary live desert tortoises on 37 plots receiving complete coverage in 2009. Ten other plots (plots 6, 7, 17, 28, 29, 30, 35, 41, 61, 64) also received a complete coverage but did not have live tortoises. All tortoises in this table received health evaluations unless noted as unprocessed.

Plot no.	Tortoises with completed health evaluations					Unprocessed tortoises		Total no. tortoises/plot
	Adult males	Sub adult males	Adult females	Sub adult females	Total	Immature or juvenile tortoises	Adults: size and sex unknown	
1	5		6		11		1	12
2	6	1	3		10		3	13
3	16		4		20		1	21
4	8	1	9	1	19			19
5	1		2		3			3
8					0	1 immature		1
9	5	1	2	1	9		1	10
10	3	1	3	1	8			8
12	10	1	7	2	20		1	21
13					0		1	1
14					0	1 immature	1	2
16	3		1	1	5		1	6
18	5		3		8		1	9
19	2	1	1	1	5			5
20	14		5	1	20		2	22
21	5		2	3	10		1	11
22			2		2			2
23	1				1			1
24	6	3	3	1	13		2	15
25	2		3		5			5
26			1		1	1 immature		2
27	2		1		3	1 immature		4
32	1		5	1	7			7
33	2				2			2
34	1				1		1	2
36	7	1	5		13	1 immature, 1 juvenile		15
37	1		1		2			2
38	2				2			2
39	4		4	1	9		1	10
40	3		3		6	1 immature		7
42	1		1		2			2
44	1	1		1	3			3
45	2		1		3	1 immature		4
46	3	1	2		6	1 immature		7
47	1				1			1
62	2	1	1	1	5			5
63	3		2		5			5

* Note: Health evaluation forms have been completed for these individuals unless specified as unprocessed

Table 8, Tortoises with suspect or positive ELISA tests for *Mycoplasma agassizii* or *M. testudineum* or both species of *Mycoplasma*, with notes on clinical signs of upper respiratory tract disease.

Plot no.	Tort ID	Age	Size (mm)	Sex	ELISA status	Clinical signs of upper respiratory tract disease
1	7321	Adult	272	M	<i>M. agassizii</i> positive	MILD: L nare 10% occluded; mild crusts on palpebrae and periocular area; mild discharge in fornix of both eyes; mild peeling of scales on upper palpebrae of both eyes
1	7323	Adult	219	M	<i>M. agassizii</i> suspect	MODERATE to SEVERE: R nare 10% occluded; moderate to severe edema and crusts on upper and lower palpebrae of both eyes; moderate to severe wet discharge on lower palpebrae, mild peeling of scales of upper periocular area
1	7324	Adult	255	F	<i>M. agassizii</i> positive <i>M. testudineum</i> positive	MODERATE to SEVERE: Dried exudate in nares (moderate to severe); R and L nares 20% and 80% occluded respectively; A small amount of cloudy white particulates flushed from nares during lavage; mild edema and crusts of palpebrae and periocular area; mild peeling of scales in periocular area of both eyes, R eye 10% closed; moderate mucus present on R globe; conjunctiva 10% exposed in both eyes
2	7283	Adult	299	M	<i>M. agassizii</i> suspect	MODERATE: Partial (moderate) occlusion of L nare (with dried dirt -no % given); mild to severe crusts on palpebrae and periocular area of both eyes; mild wet discharge from L eye; mild peeling of scales on upper periocular area of R eye; conjunctiva 5% exposed in R eye
2	7284	Adult	262	F	<i>M. agassizii</i> positive	MILD to MODERATE: Mild to moderate edema (mostly of L eye); mild discharge at fornix of R eye; mild peeling of scales on lower periocular area of both eyes; R eye 40% closed; L eye 35% closed;
2	7285	Adult	288	M	<i>M. agassizii</i> suspect	MODERATE: Mild occlusion of L nare (10%- with dirt); moderate to severe crusts on palpebrae of both eyes; moderate dry discharge from R eye; mild peeling of scales on lower periocular area of L eye; R eye 50% closed; L eye 25% closed and covered with dirt (conjunctiva condition unclear)
3	7243	Adult	304	M	<i>M. agassizii</i> suspect	MILD to MODERATE: Mild discoloration of palpebrae of both eyes; mild edema in palpebrae and periocular area of both eyes; mild to moderate crusts of palpebrae and periocular area in both eyes; mild wet discharge from L eye, mild to moderate peeling of scales in palpebrae and periocular area of both eyes; conjunctiva 5% exposed in both eyes
3	7252	Adult	260	M	<i>M. agassizii</i> positive	MILD: Mild dried, yellow exudate in both nares; mild edema of periocular area of both eyes; mild to moderate crusts on palpebrae and periocular area of both eyes; mild peeling of scales in periocular area of both eyes; conjunctiva 5% exposed in both eyes
3	7253	Adult	243	M	<i>M. agassizii</i> positive	MODERATE to SEVERE: R and L nares 60% and 10% occluded, respectively; mild edema of palpebrae of both eyes; mild to moderate crusts on palpebrae and periocular area of both eyes; mild wet discharge from L eye, mild peeling of scales on palpebrae and periocular area of both eyes; R eyes mildly swollen; conjunctiva 5% exposed in L eye
4	7271	Adult	265	M	<i>M. agassizii</i> suspect	MILD: R and L nares both 5% occluded; mild discoloration of lower palpebrae of both eyes and upper palpebrae of L eye; mild edema of periocular area of both eyes; mild to moderate crusts in both eyes; mild wet discharge at fornix of both eyes; mild peeling of scales on periocular area of both eyes; R eye 50% closed

Table 8, continued. Tortoises with suspect or positive ELISA tests for *Mycoplasma agassizii* or *M. testudineum* or both species of *Mycoplasma*, with notes on clinical signs of upper respiratory tract disease.

Plot no.	Tort ID	Age	Size (mm)	Sex	ELISA status	Clinical signs of upper respiratory tract disease
4	7273	Adult	250	M	<i>M. agassizii</i> positive	MILD: R and L nares both 5% occluded; mild discoloration of upper palpebrae of L eye; mild edema of L eye; mild to moderate crusts in both eyes; mild wet discharge in fornix of L eye; mild peeling of scales on lower periocular area of both eyes; R and L eyes both 5% closed; conjunctiva 5% exposed in L eye (R not visible)
4	7311	Adult	274	M	<i>M. agassizii</i> suspect	MILD: mild peeling of scales in periocular area of L eye; R eye 40% closed; L eye 40% closed; conjunctiva 2% exposed in R eye and 5% exposed in L eye
4	7312	Adult	250	F	<i>M. agassizii</i> positive	MODERATE: Mild wet exudate dripping from R nare; mild clear wet exudate on beak; glaze of exudate partially occluding both nares; mild discoloration of upper and lower palpebrae of both eyes; mild to moderate edema (upper periocular area) and crusts on lower palpebrae of both eyes; mild dried discharge at fornix of R eye; mild peeling of scales in periocular area of both eyes; R eye 15% closed; L eye 20% closed; moderate dried and wet mucus present on R globe; conjunctiva 10% exposed in R eye
4	7313	Adult	238	F	<i>M. agassizii</i> positive	MILD: L nare 10% occluded; mild edema on upper palpebrae of both eyes; mild to moderate crusts on palpebrae of both eyes; mild amount of peeling scales at fornix of L eye
21	7206	Adult	240	M	<i>M. agassizii</i> positive	MILD: R nare 50% occluded (by dirt); mild edema of upper palpebrae of R eye; crusts of palpebrae and periocular areas in L eye; mild peeling of scales on palpebrae and periocular areas of both eyes; conjunctiva 5% exposed in both eyes
21	7207	Adult	276	M	<i>M. agassizii</i> positive	MILD: R and L nares 10% and 30% occluded respectively; mild edema and crusts of palpebrae and periocular area of both eyes; mild peeling of scales in periocular area of both eyes
32	7192	Adult	204	F	<i>M. agassizii</i> positive	MILD: R and L nares 10% and 5% occluded respectively; mild edema of upper palpebrae of both eyes; mild crusts on lower palpebrae of both eyes
39	7126	Adult	265	M	<i>M. agassizii</i> positive	MILD: mild edema of lower palpebrae and mild to moderate edema of lower periocular area of both eyes; mild crusts of palpebrae and periocular areas in both eyes; mild peeling of scales on palpebrae and periocular area of both eyes; both eyes partially closed (30%R, 20% L); conjunctiva 5% exposed in R eye, 10% in L eye
39	7143	Adult	253	F	<i>M. agassizii</i> suspect	MILD: R and L nares 10% and 15% occluded, respectively; mild edema and crusts of upper palpebrae of both eyes; mild dried discharge of both eyes; mucus present on globe of R eye
40	7124	Adult	210	F	<i>M. agassizii</i> positive	MODERATE to SEVERE: R nare 10%; mild discoloration of R eye and periocular area; mild to severe edema of palpebrae and periocular area of both eyes; mild to moderate crusts on palpebrae and periocular areas of both eyes; mild to moderate wet discharge from L eye; mild peeling of scales on periocular area of both eyes; R eyes partially closed (5%); mucus present on globe of both eyes; conjunctiva 5% exposed in R eye
63	7091	Adult	209	M	<i>M. agassizii</i> suspect	MILD to MODERATE: partial occlusion of the R nare (20%) and L nare (5%). Mild to moderate discoloration and edema of palpebrae of both eyes; mild crusts on palpebrae and moderate crusts on periocular areas of both eyes; moderate discharge at fornix of both eyes; also mucus. Eyes 25% closed; mild lateral swelling of eyes, and mild peeling of scales on R upper periocular area.

Table 9. Tortoises with **negative** ELISA tests for *Mycoplasma agassizii* and *M. testudineum*, but which exhibit multiple clinical signs of upper respiratory tract disease.

Plot no.	Tort ID	Age	Size (mm)	Sex	ELISA status	Clinical signs of upper respiratory tract disease
1	7318	Adult	252	F	negative	MODERATE to SEVERE: Nares occluded (90%R:50%L); both nares wet (moderate to severe); mild to severe edema of palpebrae of both eyes and mild edema of upper periocular area of L eye; mild to moderate crusts on palpebrae and periocular area of both eyes; mild wet discharge from both eyes; mucus present on globe of both eyes
1	7324	Adult	255	F	negative	MODERATE to SEVERE: Nares occluded (20%R:80%L); both nares damp (moderate to severe); mild to severe edema of palpebrae of both eyes and mild edema of upper periocular of L eye; mild to moderate crusts on palpebrae and periocular area of both eyes; mild wet discharge from both eyes; mucus present on globe of both eyes
1	7325	Adult	247	F	negative	MODERATE: L nare is 20% occluded and has moderate amount of dried exudate; mild edema of R eye upper palpebrae and periocular area and mild edema of L eye upper palpebrae; mild to moderate crusts on palpebrae and periocular area of both eyes; mild discharge from both eyes; L eye has mild peeling scales overall; eyes partially closed (50%R, 20%L); both eyes are dull and cloudy with a filmy covering; conjunctiva 2% exposed in L eye
4	7279	Adult	214	M	negative	MODERATE: Nares occluded (10%R:5%L); mild edema of palpebrae of both eyes and mild to severe crusts on palpebrae and periocular area of both; R eye severely swollen and partially closed with moderate wet discharge; conjunctiva exposed 40% in R eye and 10% in L eye
4	7310	Adult	245	F	negative	MODERATE: Nares occluded (10%R:30%L); mild crusts on lower palpebrae of R eye and mild to severe crusts on palpebrae and periocular area of L eye; R eye has moderate peeling scales overall and L eye has mild peeling scales on lower palpebrae
16	7136	Adult	290	M	negative	MODERATE to SEVERE: L nare 75% occluded; mild to moderate edema of palpebrae and periocular area of both eyes; mild crusts on palpebrae and moderate to severe crusts on periocular area of both eyes; mild wet discharge from both eyes, mild peeling of scales of upper periocular area on both eyes; conjunctiva 5% exposed in both eyes
45	7098	Adult	316	M	negative	MODERATE: Mild to severe edema and crusts on palpebrae and periocular area of both eyes; mild to moderate discharge from fornix of both eyes; L eye is moderately sunken; eyes partially closed (10%R:70%L); conjunctiva 5% exposed in R eye and L eye is obscured by crusts
46	7099	Adult	255	M	negative	MODERATE: L nare 20% occluded; mild to moderate edema and crusts of palpebrae and perioculars of both eyes; mild dry discharge from both eyes, mild peeling of scales of periocular area on both eyes; R eye mildly swollen; both eyes 20% closed and have mucus present on globes; conjunctiva exposed in both eyes (40%R:10%L)
63	7072	Adult	244	M	negative	MODERATE: Mild to moderate edema of palpebrae and periocular area of both eyes; mild to severe crusts on palpebrae and periocular area of both eyes; mild to moderate discharge from both eyes; R eye is moderately sunken; both eyes 20% closed; mucus present on globes of both eyes; R eye cloudy
63	7073	Adult	210	F	negative	MODERATE: R nare 20% occluded; mild edema of palpebrae and periocular area of both eyes; moderate to severe crusts on palpebrae/periocular area of both eyes; mild dry discharge from both eyes, mild peeling of scales of upper periocular area on both eyes; conjunctiva 20% exposed in both eyes

Table 10. Tortoises with signs of severe trauma from predators.

Plot no.	Tort ID	Age	Size (mm)	Sex	Trauma rating on gular horn			Signs of severe trauma
					Distribution	Severity	Chronicity	
1	7315	Adult	227	F	severe	moderate	Injuries healed or healing	Predator trauma to 25% of plastron including gular (100%); ≥ 9 marginal scutes have chips
1	7318	Adult	252	F	severe	severe	Injuries healed or healing	Most of gular chewed off
2	7283	Adult	299	M	severe	severe	Injuries healed or healing	Severe trauma from predator to entire gular, bone/scute replacement underway ≥ 5 marginal scutes
2	7284	Adult	262	F	severe	severe	Injuries healed or healing	Entire gular chewed off, 25% of humeral scutes chewed; ≥ 4 marginal scutes have chips
2	7285	Adult	288	M	severe	severe	Injuries healed or healing	Entire gular chewed off, ≥ 3 marginal scutes have chips
2	7286	Adult	305	M	severe	severe	Injuries healed or healing	Entire gular chewed off, ≥ 4 marginal scutes have chips
2	7317	Adult	284	M	moderate	severe	Injuries healed or healing	Trauma from predator on 90% of gular (bone/ scute replacement), carapace and plastron have 4 patches of trauma, ≥ 9 marginal scutes have chips
3	7656	Adult	211	F	severe	severe	Injuries healed or healing	Extensive trauma from predator on entire gular horn, 30% of both humeral scutes, and ≥ 14 other locations on shell; tooth marks present
4	7311	Adult	274	M	severe	severe	Injuries healed or healing	Trauma from predator to gular horn (completely chewed off), to plastron including both humeral scutes and 4 other patches with damaged scutes, ≥ 8 marginal scutes with trauma from chewing
5	7296	Adult	287	M	severe	severe	Injuries healed or healing	Extensive trauma from predator on gular (it is missing) and humeral scutes (25% with bone/scute replacement); trauma to plastron includes claw/gnash marks and ~ 4 sites with chewing; ≥ 15 marginal scutes have damage from chewing; forelimbs and foot pads have missing scales from chewing
9	7240	Adult	238	F	moderate	severe	Injuries healed or healing	Tip of gular horn chewed away on R side, numerous other small chips in laminae that appear to be from chewing
12	7169	Adult	238	F	mild	severe	Injuries healed or healing	Tips of both gular horns broken or chewed off

Table 10, continued. Tortoises with signs of severe trauma from predators.

Plot no.	Tort ID	Age	Size (mm)	Sex	Trauma rating on gular horn		Signs of severe trauma
					Distribution	Severity Chronicity	
12	7225	Adult	237	F	severe	Injuries healed or healing	Tips of both gular horns chewed off, chipping and trauma from chewing on ≥ 5 marginal scutes
12	7228	Adult	250	M	severe	Injuries healed or healing	Extensive trauma from predator on gular and humeral scutes, plastron, carapace and ≥ 13 marginal scutes, forelimbs and foot pads also appear to have missing scales.
16	7136	Adult	290	M	severe	Injuries healed or healing	Entire gular chewed off; predator trauma to 11 marginal scutes; 5 patches of bone and scute replacement on carapace and on plastron (10 total)
16	7139	Young adult	192	F	moderate	Injuries healed or healing	Trauma from predator to L gular horn (edge missing); predator-caused chips and bone/scute replacement on 16 marginal scutes, 15 sites on carapace and 10 patches on plastron
16	7162	Adult	237	F	severe	Injuries healed or healing	Predator trauma: 100% of gular consists of replaced scute and bone; gular is deformed and leading edges are missing; 13 marginal scutes have bone/scute replacement and 13 additional patches are visible on plastron
18	7138	Adult	248	F	moderate	Injuries healed or healing	Predator trauma on entire gular (most is missing); 6 marginal scutes have chips; 25% of humeral scutes have damage from chewing and gnawing
18	7156	Adult	224	M	moderate	Injuries healed or healing	Tips of both gular horns have been chewed off, 3 seams of marginal scutes have bone/scute replacement
19	7195	Young adult	198	M	moderate	Injuries healed or healing	Extensive trauma to gular horn from predator
20	7194	Adult	258	M	moderate	Injuries healed or healing	Gnawing marks on both sides of gular horn
20	7173	Adult	245	F	moderate	Injuries healed or healing	Predator damage to entire gular horn, missing layers of laminae and tip missing
21	7205	Young adult	199	F	severe	Injuries healed or healing	Severe trauma to tips of both gular horns from predator
22	7090	Adult	220	F	severe	Injuries healed or healing	Predator trauma to 100% of gular horn, tips missing; bone/scute replacement underway on 25% of humeral scutes, 4 marginal scutes and 4 patches on carapace; plastron has 5 additional small chips or tooth marks

Table 10, continued. Tortoises with signs of severe trauma from predators.

Plot no.	Tort ID	Age	Size (mm)	Sex	Trauma rating on gular horn			Signs of severe trauma
					Distribution	Severity	Chronicity	
22	7176	Adult	220	F	moderate	moderate	Injuries healed or healing	Predator trauma to >25% of gular horn, 50% of L horn is missing; patches of bone/scute replacement are visible on 4 marginal scutes, 4 scutes of carapace and 2 sites on plastron
24	7056	Young adult	200	F	severe	severe	Injuries healed or healing	Predator trauma to 50% of gular horn, 14 marginal scutes have chips/bone scute replacement, 22 additional locations with chips or bone/scute replacement on carapace and plastron
24	7087	Adult	254	M	severe	severe	Injuries healed or healing	Predator trauma to 60% of gular horn and humeral scutes; 3 additional locations have chips, forelimbs have a few damaged scales
24	7131	Adult	219	F	severe	moderate	Injuries healed or healing	Predator trauma to 100% of gular horn, tips chewed off; chips and bone/scute replacement on 9 marginal scutes, 7 locations on plastron and carapace
25	7152	Adult	226	F	severe	severe	Injuries healed or healing	Predator trauma to 100% of gular horn and tip of L horn is missing; severely chewed areas covers 25% of humeral scutes and 12 marginal scutes
25	7153	Adult	256	M	severe	severe	Injuries healed or healing	Predator trauma to 50% of gular horn, tip of R horn chewed off; trauma to 6 marginal scutes from chewing; 3 sites on carapace, 4 patches of bone/ scute replacement on humeral and femoral scutes
26	7177	Adult	236	F	severe	severe	Injuries healed or healing	Predator trauma to 100% of gular horn (anterior edge also chewed off); trauma to 9 marginal scutes; humeral and femoral scutes, forelimbs and hind toe pads are missing scales
27	7163	Adult	297	M	severe	moderate	Injuries healed or healing	Predator trauma to gular horn (30% of R horn missing), chips/tooth marks and gnawing visible on 2 marginal scutes and 7 locations on plastron and carapace
32	7158	Adult	232	F	severe	severe	Injuries healed or healing	Predator trauma to 100% of gular horn (scarring from bone/scute replacement); trauma covers 25% of humeral scutes, 6 marginal scutes with bone/scute replacement

Table 10, continued. Tortoises with signs of severe trauma from predators.

Plot no.	Tort ID	Age	Size (mm)	Sex	Trauma rating on gular horn		Signs of severe trauma
					Distribution	Severity Chronicity	
32	7191	Adult	213	F	severe	moderate Injuries healed or healing	Predator trauma to 25% of gular horn, tip of L horn is missing; scales missing on forelimbs and exposed bone from chewing on L hind toe
32	7192	Young Adult	204	F	severe	moderate Injuries healed or healing	Predator trauma to 40% of gular horn, chewing resulting in chips on 3 marginal scutes and 7 other small patches on carapace and plastron
37	7069	Adult	280	M	severe	mild Injuries healed or healing	Predator trauma to 100% of gular horn, 5 marginal scutes with chips or bone/scute replacement
37	7078	Adult	230	M	severe	moderate Injuries healed or healing	Predator trauma to all of gular horn, anterior edge appears chewed off; 7 sites with predator damage on plastron, marginal scutes from LM4 to RM2 have extensive trauma from chewing; ≥ 9 small chips/trauma on carapace, both forelimbs have missing scales due to trauma
39	7119	Adult	234	F	severe	severe Injuries healed or healing	Predator trauma to gular horn (almost completely chewed off), damage extends into vertebral scute 1 and first costal scutes; 11 anterior and posterior marginal scutes severely chewed
39	7120	Adult	246	M	severe	moderate Injuries healed or healing	Severe predator trauma to 50% of gular horn, L tip of horn missing; bone/scute replacement on humeral and posterior scutes of plastron; chips/chews to 10 marginal scutes, 4 small chips on carapace
39	7127	Adult	253	F	severe	severe Injuries healed or healing	Predator damage to 100% of gular horn, L tip is missing, 5% of humeral scutes have bone/scute replacement, 11 chips and chew marks are visible on plastron and carapace
39	7129	Adult	260	F	severe	moderate Injuries healed or healing	Predator damage to 70% of gular horn and R horn is missing tip, 5 sites of chewing visible on plastron, LM scutes 1-3 have extensive trauma from chewing
42	7077	Adult	270	M	severe	moderate Injuries healed or healing	Left tip of gular partially chewed off, remaining gular damaged, humeral scutes have missing laminae (5%), parts of anal and femoral scutes are missing, 9 marginal scutes have been chewed, all limbs have some missing scales due to trauma

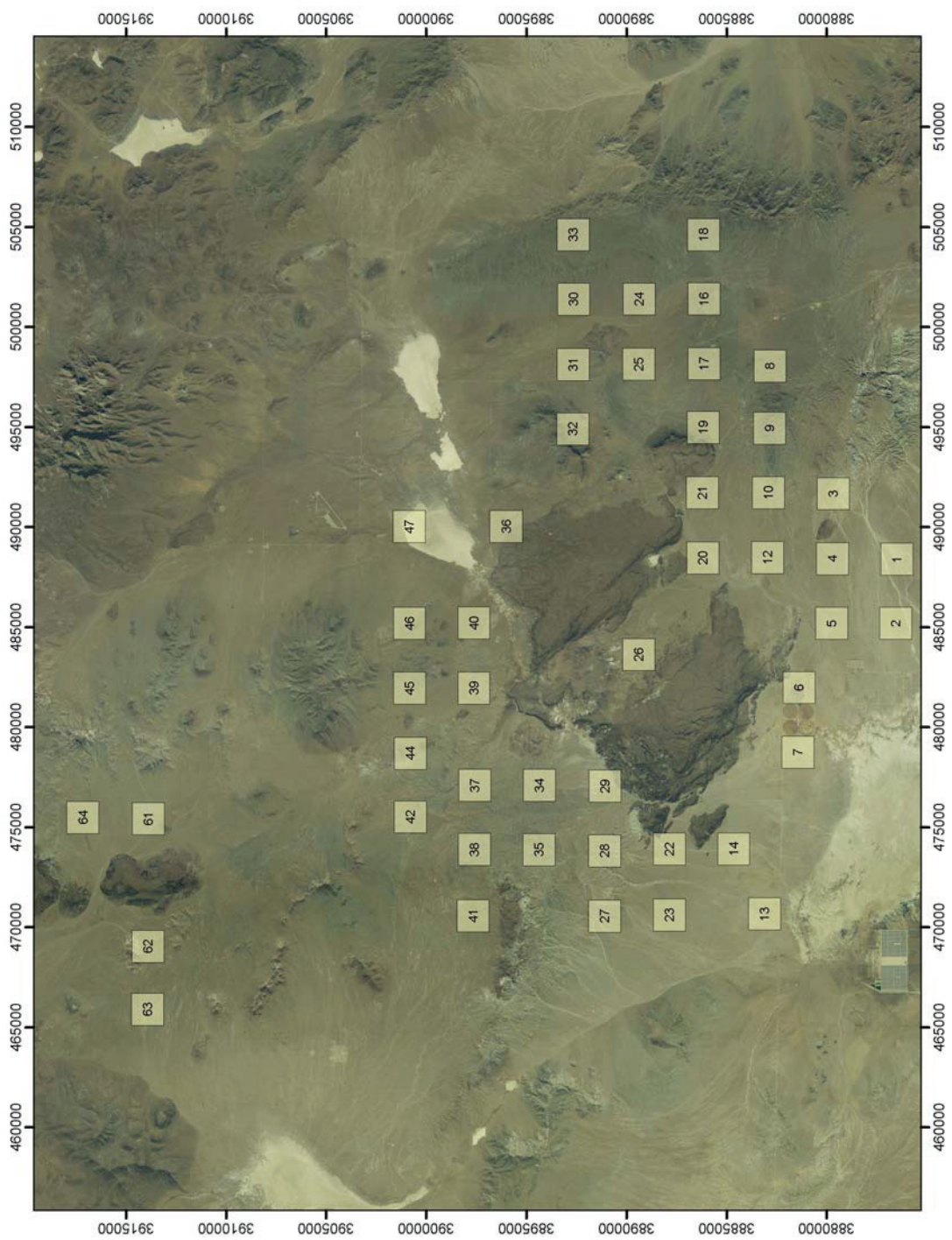


Figure 1. Location of 48 survey plots for 2009 in the Western Expansion Translocation Area (WETA) of Ft. Irwin.

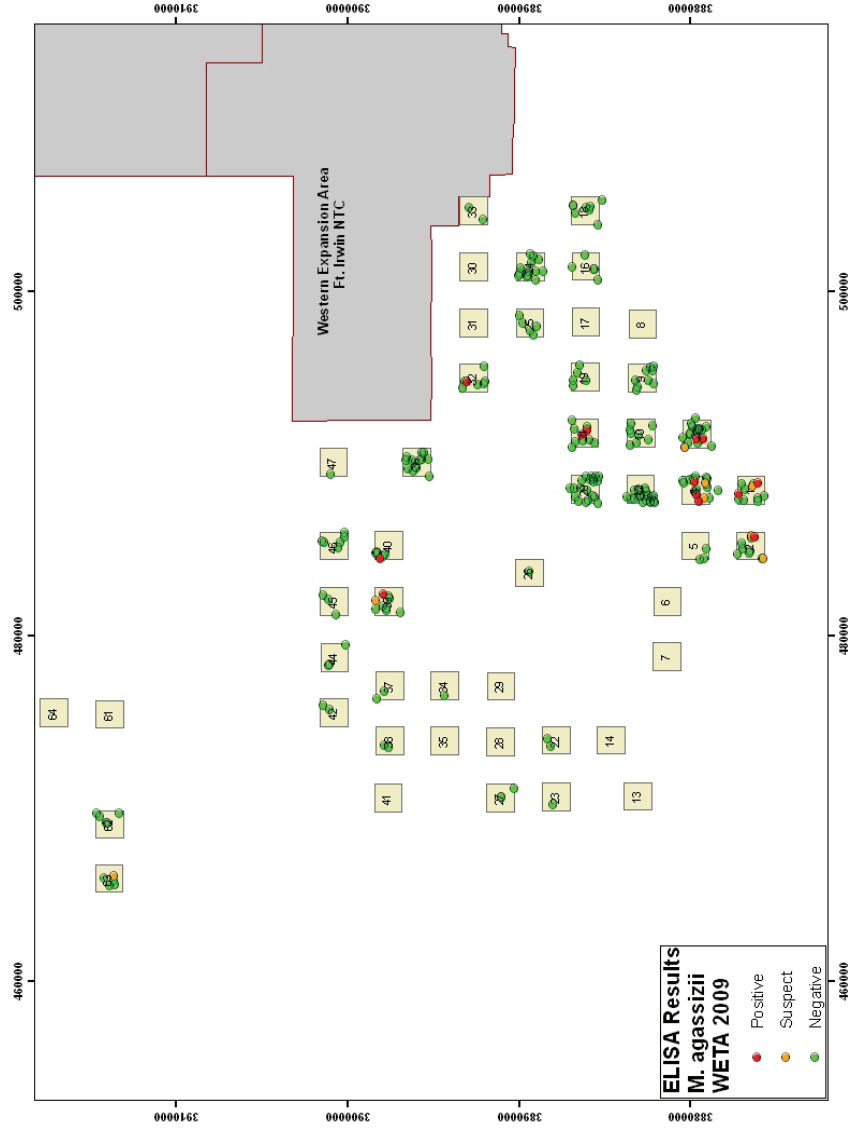


Figure 2. Distribution of 240 tortoises with negative, suspect, and positive ELISA tests for *Mycoplasma agassizii* in the Western Expansion Translocation Area.

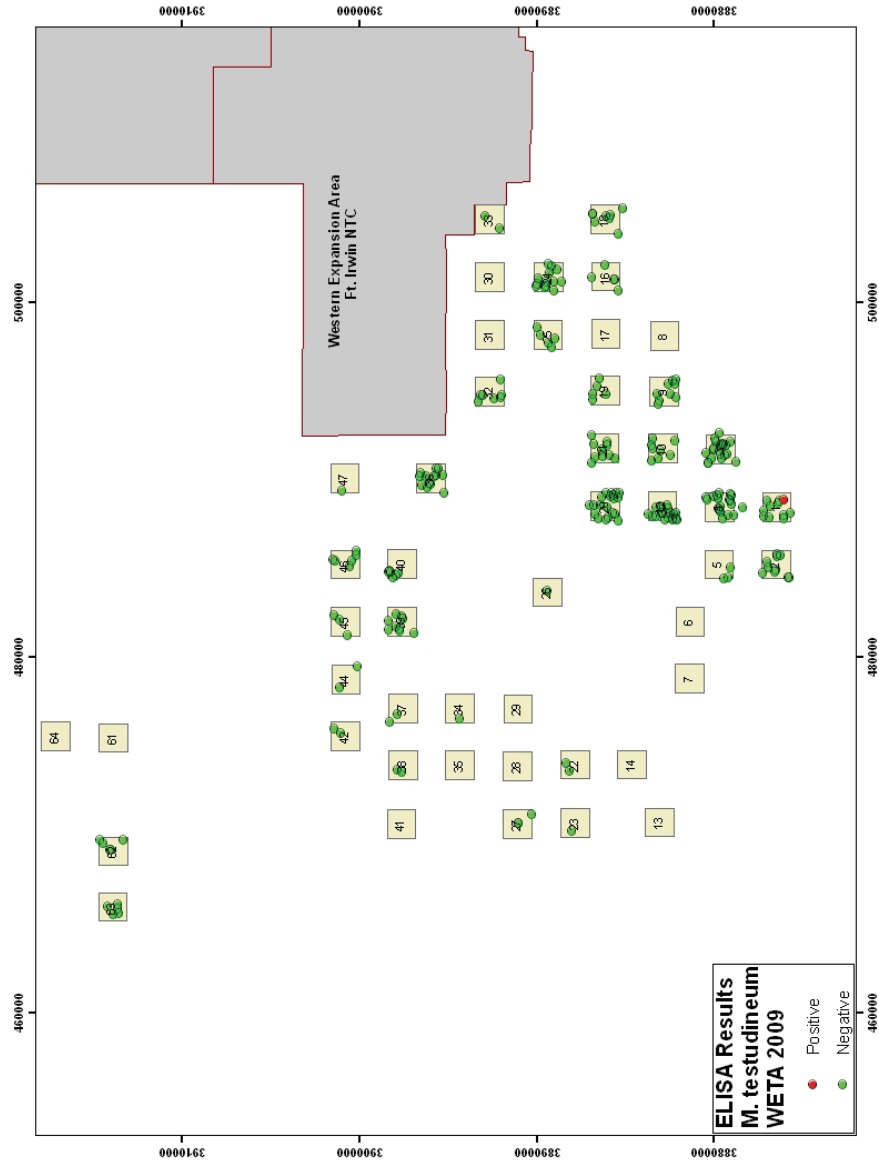


Figure 3. Distribution of 240 tortoises with negative and positive ELISA tests for *Mycoplasma testudineum* in the Western Expansion Translocation Area. No tortoises had suspect ELISA tests.

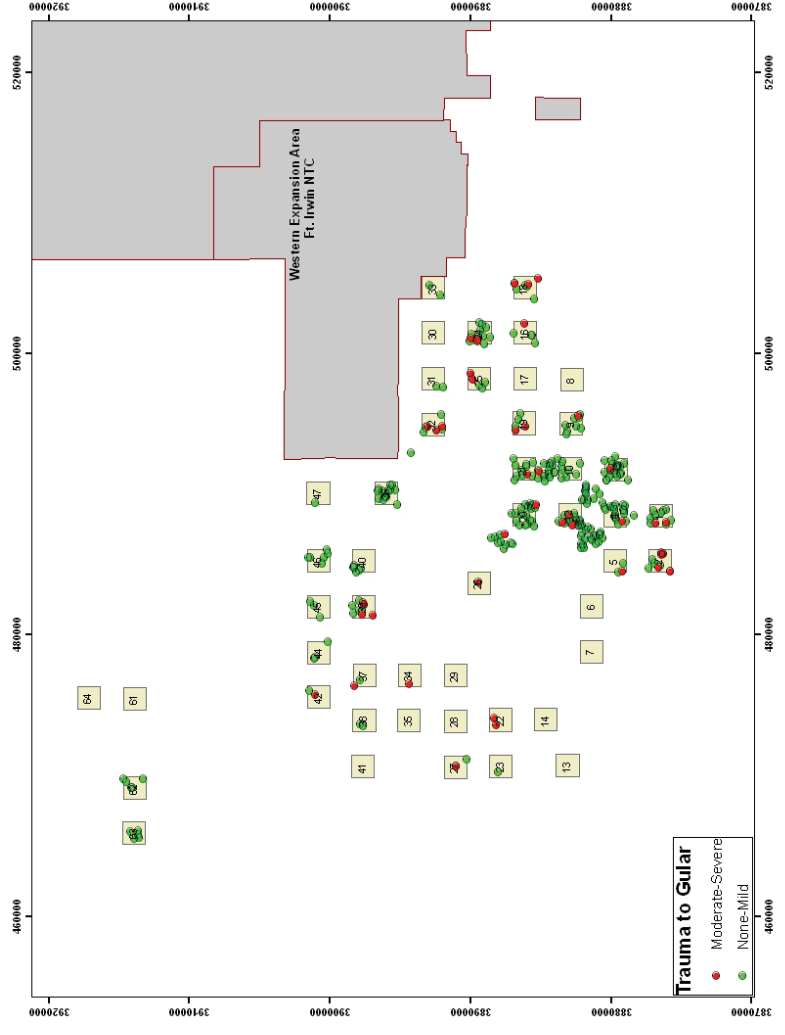


Figure 4. Locations of tortoises with evidence of severe trauma from predator attacks in the WEA and WETA.

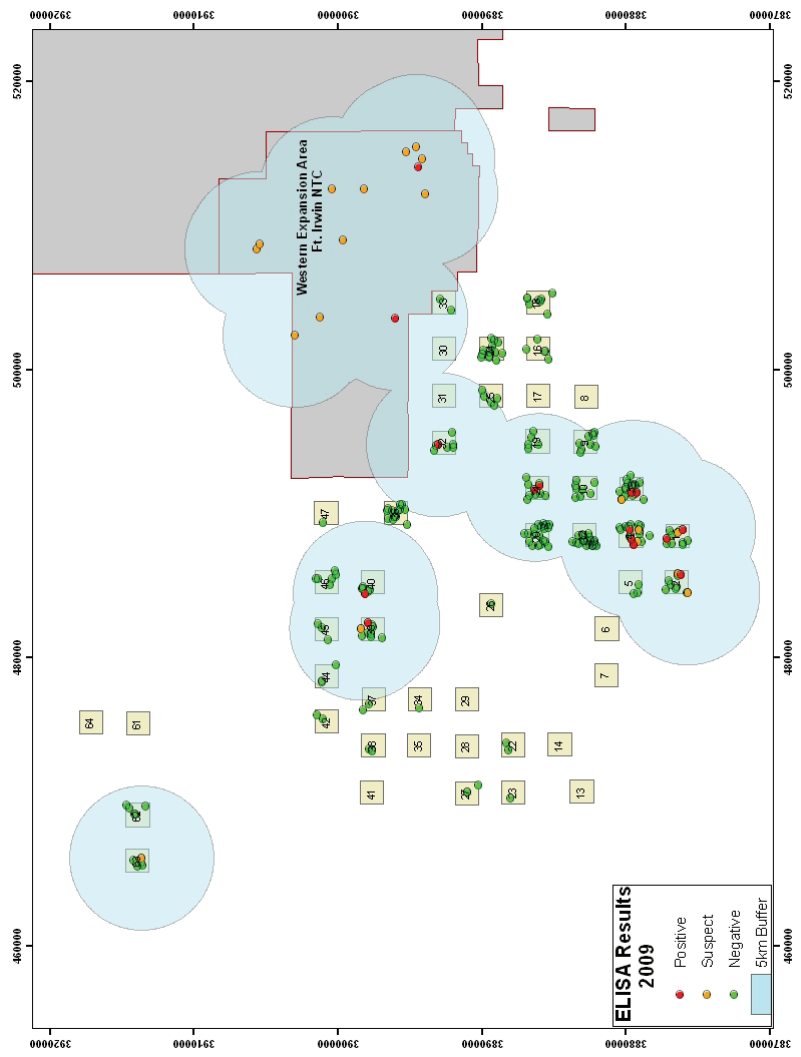


Figure 5. Locations of tortoises in the WEA and WETA in 2009 with a 5 km buffer (blue) drawn around individuals with suspect, and positive ELISA test results for *Mycoplasma agassizii* and *M. testudineum*.

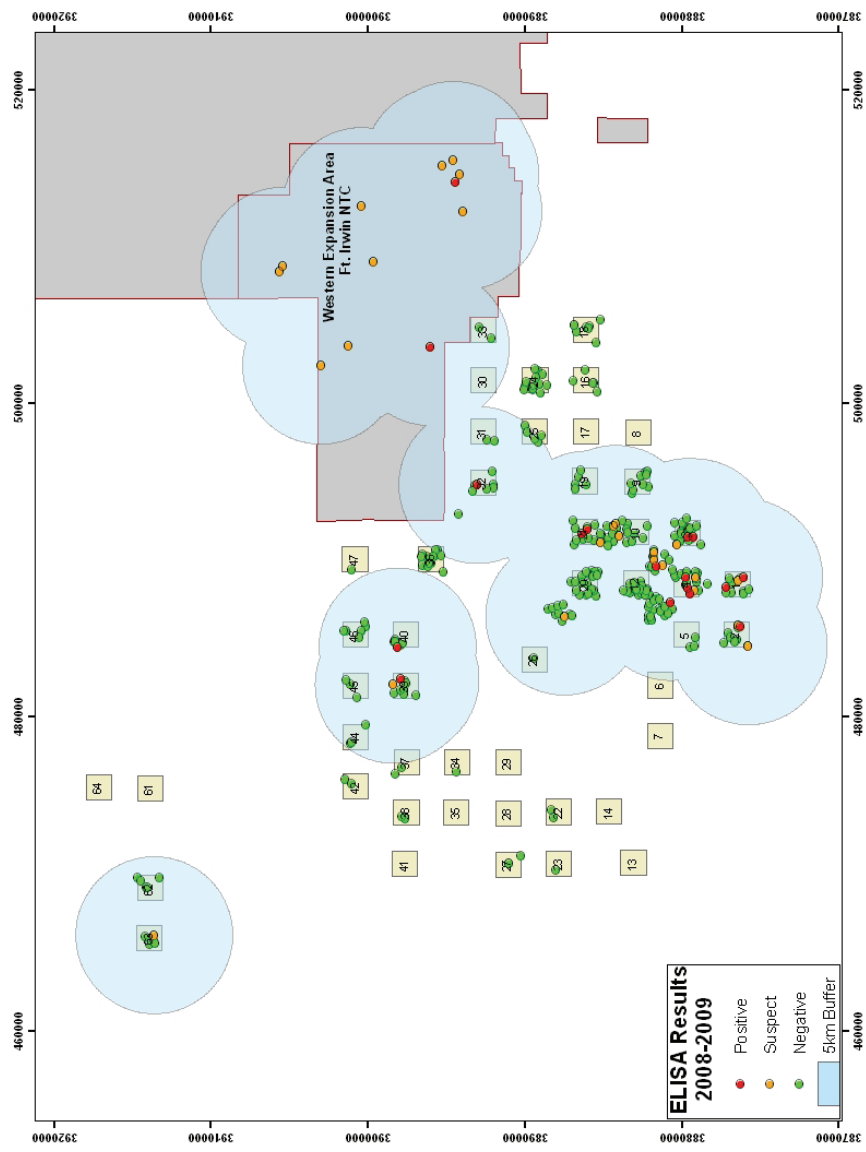


Figure 6. Locations of tortoises in the WEA and WETA in 2008 and 2009, with a 5 km buffer (blue) drawn around individuals with suspect and positive ELISA tests for *M. agassizii* and *M. testudineum*.

APPENDIX 1: Locations of 48 sample plots.

Plot no.	Township, Range, Section	UTMs ,Southwest corner	
		Easting	Northing
1	T11N, R2W, Sec. 19	487599	3875684
2	T11N, R3W, Sec. 23	484391	3875732
3	T11N, R2W, Sec. 9	490870	3878861
4	T11N, R2W, Sec. 7	487623	3878904
5	T11N, R3W, Sec. 11	484394	3878946
6	T11N, R3W, Sec. 4	481184	3880572
7	T11N, R3W, Sec. 6	477958	3880622
8	T12N, R1W, Sec. 31	497255	3882018
9	T12N, R2W, Sec. 35	494141	3882040
10	T12N, R2W, Sec. 33	490924	3882101
12	T12N, R2W, Sec. 31	487684	3882139
13	T12N, R4W, Sec. 32	469876	3882304
14	T32S, R44E, Sec. 32	473128	3883840
16	T32S, R47E, Sec. 30	500597	3885319
17	T32S, R46E, sec. 26	497366	3885324
18	T32S, R47E, Sec. 28	503815	3885342
19	T32S, R46E, Sec. 28	494181	3885368
20	T32S, R45E, Sec. 26	487661	3885381
21	T32S, R46E, Sec. 30	490927	3885395
22	T32S, R44E, Sec. 20	473115	3887058
23	T32S, R43E, Sec. 24	469825	3887054

24	T32S, R47E, Sec. 18	500594	3888565
25	T32S, R46E, Sec. 14	497338	3888578
26	T32S, R45E, Sec. 17	482834	3888594
27	T32S, R43E, Sec. 12	469762	3890289
28	T32S, R44E, Sec. 8	473023	3890288
29	T32S, R44E, Sec. 10	476257	3890282

APPENDIX 1 (Continued): Locations of 48 sample plots.

Plot no.	Township, Range, Section, Meridian	UTMs ,Southwest corner	
		Easting	Northing
30	T32S, R47E, Sec. 6	500593	3891853
31	T32S, R46E, Sec. 2	497330	3891866
32	T32S, R46E, Sec. 4	494106	3891886
33	T32S; R47E, Sec. 4	503815	3891859
34	T31S, R44E, Sec. 34	476296	3893547
35	T31S, R44E, Sec. 32	473088	3893576
36	T31S, R45E, Sec. 25	489235	3895197
37	T31S, R44E, Sec. 22	476298	3896761
38	T31S, R44E, Sec. 20	473092	3896769
39	T31S, R45E, Sec 19	481160	3896806
40	T31S, R45E, Sec. 21	484411	3896805
41	T31S, R43E, Sec. 24	469786	3896845
42	T31S, R44E, Sec. 9	474721	3899987
44	T31S, R44E, Sec. 11	477902	3899983
45	T31S, R45E, Sec. 7	481154	3900013
46	T31S, R45E, Sec. 9	484392	3900027
47	T31S, R45E, Sec. 12	489226	3900038
61	T29S, R44E, Sec. 33	474635	3913083
62	T29S, R43E, Sec. 35	468250	3913106
63	T29S, R43E, Sec. 33	465104	3913124
64	T29S, R44E, Sec. 21	474699	3916353

US FISH AND WILDLIFE ANNUAL REPORT:

**DESERT TORTOISE HOMING BEHAVIOR RESEARCH ACTIVITIES
IN SUPPORT OF
THE FORT IRWIN NATIONAL TRAINING CENTER EXPANSION PROJECT**

PREPARED FOR:

Roy Averill-Murray

Desert Tortoise Recovery Office

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

1340 Financial Blvd. Ste 234

Reno, Nevada 89502

PREPARED BY:

Danna Hinderle 4738 Atlanta Drive San Diego, CA 92115

William I. Boarman, Ph.D. Conservation Science Research & Consulting 2522 Ledgeview Place
Spring Valley, CA 91977

Significant contributions from: Andrew Walde, Dr. Becca Lewison, Dr. Doug Deutschman.
Research supported by Fort Irwin National Training Center, QinetiQ.

ABSTRACT

Translocation of threatened or vulnerable species is a tool increasingly used for conservation and management. For the threatened desert tortoise (*Gopherus agassizii*) there are current and future plans that rely on translocation to augment populations. In some areas, homing behavior has been described as a cause of translocation failure. However, the extent to which desert tortoises exhibit homing behavior is not well understood. This project explored the homing behavior of forty tortoises: 23 tortoises were experimentally translocated, 9 tortoises were handled but not translocated and 8 tortoises served as the control group. The experiment was conducted in September and October 2009, and all tortoises were radio tracked daily to examine their ability to navigate in a homeward direction. The tortoises were displaced within 8km of their established home range, and 5 tortoises were able to navigate to their source location. Handling tortoises had no effect on their movement patterns. Within the translocated group, males were found to move significantly more than females. This experiment addresses a key data gap by identifying homing behaviors in desert tortoises, and provides essential information to promote successful translocations in future efforts.

INTRODUCTION

The 2008 land expansion of the Fort Irwin National Training Center (NTC), near Barstow, California annexed 545 km² to the existing army base (Public Law 2002), land which supports an estimated 2000 desert tortoises (*Gopherus agassizii*) (USFWS 1994; Heaton, Nussear et al. 2008). Translocation was deemed an acceptable management tool for this particular population (USFWS 2008), and more than 600 tortoises were moved from the NTC's Southern Expansion Area to nearby translocation sites in April 2008. It is anticipated another 500 - 1000 tortoises will be translocated from the NTC's Western Expansion Area, WEA, to adjacent habitat, in the near future. (see Appendix I).

Translocation is a conservation management tool used to establish, re-establish or augment populations in decline (Griffith, Scott et al. 1989; Dodd and Seigel 1991; Germano and Bishop 2009). However, a review of herpetofauna translocations suggests translocations result in success rates ranging from 14% – 42%, a clear indication that improved translocation strategies are essential (Dodd and Seigel 1991; Germano and Bishop 2009). Existing studies suggest animals move away from the translocation site and move through the landscape at a higher rate than control animals (Sullivan, Kwiatkowski et al. 2004; Bertolero, Oro et al. 2007; Field, Tracy et al. 2007). More specifically, in a recent review of 91 herpetofauna translocations, the leading cause of translocation failure was homing behavior (Germano and Bishop 2009), defined as orientation of movements towards a certain angle, usually a homeward direction (Rittenhouse, Millspaugh et al. 2007). Desert tortoises are believed to have homing abilities, although neither the mechanism, nor the extent has been extensively studied. The mechanism which drives increased movement after translocation is not fully understood, but could be explained by increased stress levels, disease exposure, displacement by conspecifics, avoidance of predators or anthropogenic influence, habitat suitability, or homing (Bertolero, Oro et al. 2007; Field, Tracy et al. 2007; Teixeira, De Azevedo et al. 2007).

Translocation is listed in the 2008 Draft Recovery Plan as a key component to reverse current declines in desert tortoise populations. Given the importance of translocation to this population, continued research is essential to ascertain how this management strategy can be done most effectively. Greater understanding of a desert tortoises' ability to traverse a landscape in search of their source location is essential for the success of future translocations.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Study Site

The study was conducted on the Western Expansion Area of the National Training Center, near Barstow, California. This expansion area is bounded to the north and east by active training areas of the NTC, and to the south and west by land mostly managed by the Bureau of Land Management. The study site was historically used by both the military and public, although is currently closed to both user groups, and is therefore relatively undisturbed. The study area encompassed approximately 140km² after the tortoises were experimentally translocated. The study area is characterized by a perennial vegetation structure typical of the Western Mojave, dominated by Creosote (*Larrea tridentata*) Burr Sage (*Ambrosia dumosa*) and Ephedra (*Ephedra californica*) with no significant topographic barriers.

Radio Tracking

Extensive clearance surveys were conducted on the WEA commencing in April 2008 and this initial capture group provided the animals for this study. Tortoises were processed upon this initial encounter (weighed, MCL measured, fitted with a radio transmitter) under permit TE-102235-3, and processed a second time to draw blood and test for disease and antibodies to *Mycoplasma agassizii*. From this larger group of animals, 40 desert tortoises (20 Males, and 20 Females) comprised the sample for this homing study: 23 tortoises were experimentally translocated (12M, 11F), 9 tortoises (4M, 5F) were handled and returned to their location of capture and 8 tortoises (5M, 3F) acted as controls and were observed, but not handled. The criteria for selection included tortoises that had a midline carapace length (MCL) > 209, tested negative for *Mycoplasma agassizii* (with two exceptions that had not been tested) and showed no clinical signs of disease upon capture. All tortoises were radio tracked up to four times per day, with an average of 1.52 tracking events per day. Tortoises in the translocated group were captured on September 21-24, October 1 and 3, 2009 using hand-held radio receivers (R-1000 Communication Specialist Inc. Orange, CA) and a Yagi-Uda directional hand-held antenna, and moved between 2km and 8km away from their capture location. The tortoises were observed continually for a minimum of the first 30 minutes after release, and radio tracked daily until they were returned to their capture location on October 25, 27 or 28, 2009. Tortoises in the handling control group were captured on September 21, 23, 24, October 2, or 3, 2009. 4 tortoises were handled at their burrow for less than 1 hour (weighed, measured, health assessment), and 5 tortoises were handled for up to 3 hours, 12 minutes, (weighed, measured, health assessment, soaked for 20 minutes, then placed in a vehicle and transported 8km), then returned to their initial capture site. The control tortoises were located, but not handled at all during this experiment. At each tracking event, tortoise geographic location (Universal Transverse Mercator, UTM), disposition, activity, and compass orientation was recorded. The geographic locations were recorded with Garmin GPSMap76 unit, with an estimated error rate of 3-6 meters. Desert tortoise processing and handling procedures were conducted as outlined in USFWS permit TE-201918-1.

RESULTS

For each tortoise, data was collected daily regarding the habitat location (burrow, pallet, rock, shrub, other), behavioral activity, geographic location (UTMs) and compass orientation. Thirty-two tortoises were handled between September 21 – October 3, 2009, and 18 tortoises were handled October 25 – 28, 2009. Eight tortoises voided during handling. (see Appendix II). Two tortoises were not returned to their original capture location as they could not be extracted from their burrow in the novel location. These tortoises will be returned to their capture location after emergence in the spring. All tortoises were alive and in their winter hibernation burrows at the conclusion of the experiment on November 8, 2009.

A significant number of tortoises were able to navigate to their source location, analyzed with Cochran's test of linear trend for ordered data ($\chi^2 = 3.76$, d.f. = 1, $p = 0.052$). (See Table 1. See Appendix III).

Arrived Home	Displacement Distance			Total
	2km	5km	8km	
Yes	4	1	0	5
No	6	6	6	18
Totals	10	7	6	23

Table 1. Number of tortoises that arrived back to their source location after translocation.

An analysis of the total distance traveled by each group (T = Translocated, H = Handling control, or C = Control) shows that translocated tortoises moved significantly more than either the handling or control (Translocated: 5.6 km +/- 2.8 S.D., Handling: 1.7 km +/- 2.4 S.D., Control: 1.0 km +/- 0.7 S.D.). There were no differences between movements in the handling and control group (ANOVA p-value <0.001, Tukey’s post hoc values C:T and H:T, p-value <0.001 and H:C, p-value = 0.8). There were no differences in total distance moved between the handling and control groups, even when examining the data 1, 3, and 7 days post-treatment.

There was a significant difference in the distance traveled between translocated males and females (2-way ANOVA, p-value = 0.014); translocated males moved more than translocated females. (two-sample t-test for pooled variance, p-value = 0.004).

To consider whether the likelihood of returning home could be explained by the distance a tortoise traveled following treatment, logistic regression was used. A significant effect was found, which suggests that the likelihood of returning to the home location decreasing by 1.9 fold for every kilometer moved ($\beta_0 = -0.955$, $\beta_1 = 0.635$, $X^2 = 4.64$, d.f = 1, p-value = 0.031). See Fig. 1.

CONCLUSION

The 2008 Draft Recovery Plan for desert tortoises includes a number of recovery actions specific to augmenting depleted populations through a strategic program. Notably sections 3.1 and 3.3 propose to “implement translocations in target areas to augment populations....in conjunction with threat management” (USFWS 2008). Because translocation is one of the primary management tools to recover desert tortoise populations, information that can improve the success rate of translocation efforts is essential.

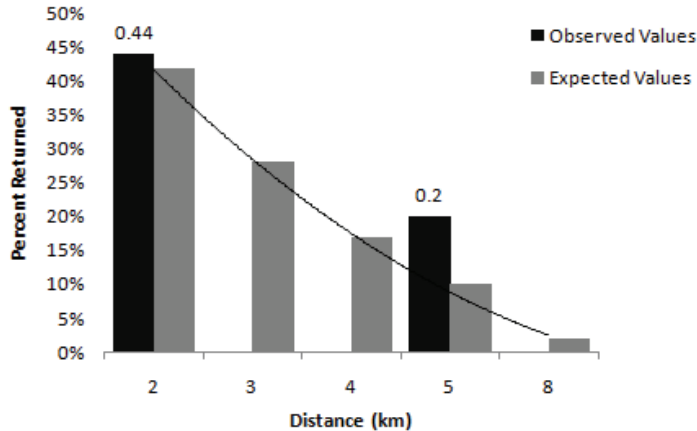


Fig. 1. The observed and expected likelihood of returning to the source location.

Evidence from this experiment suggests that tortoises are likely to exhibit homing behavior when translocated. This experiment also suggests that tortoises have a higher likelihood of returning to their source location when their translocated destination is less than 2km from their source location. This is consistent with the 2009 review paper citing the most common reported causes of herpetofauna translocation failure as homing and poor habitat (Germano and Bishop 2009). Furthermore, homing behavior is prevalent in many species of turtles and tortoises. Empirical homing studies conducted on wood turtles (*Clemmys insculpta*), painted turtles (*Chrysemys picta marginata*), box turtles (*Terrapene carolina*), three-toed box turtle (*Terrapene carolina triunguis*), musk turtles (*Sternotheriis odoratus*) and European pond turtles (*Emys orbicularis*) suggest site fidelity to a home range and to nesting sites, and an ability to home which may be dependent on a turtles' sex, displacement distance and direction, and topographic barriers. There also appears to be a critical distance, or threshold, upon which a turtle is unable to navigate back to familiar territory (Gould 1957; Emlen 1969; Carroll and Ehrenfeld 1978; Lebboroni and Chelazzi 2000; Smar and Chambers 2005; Rittenhouse, Millspaugh et al. 2007).

Translocated animals moved significantly more than animals that were not translocated (this included the handled and control groups). Increased movement likely has short term and long term effects upon the translocated individuals. Such patterns are biologically meaningful and certainly imply translocation elicits behaviors outside of their optimal range (Teixeira, De Azevedo et al. 2007). Animals within their own home range are familiar with the spatial distribution of resources and conspecifics, and can access those resources efficiently. Conversely, translocated individuals move in less-optimal patterns, as they are unfamiliar with their novel surroundings. It is likely that such increased movement heightens vulnerability to predation, mortality, disease, and competition (Dodd and Seigel 1991; Teixeira, De Azevedo et al. 2007). Thus, tortoises will have to invest resources in finding an appropriate new home range and will reveal a range of movement patterns and behaviors in doing so.

Furthermore, translocated males moved longer distances than translocated females. Differences in movement patterns between sexes are consistent with males having larger home range and good spatial memories (O'Connor, Zimmerman et al. 1994; Field, Tracy et al. 2007; Harless, Walde et al. 2009), and considering these differences is important when choosing translocation sites and strategies.

This experiment occurred in the fall, during a time when tortoises are becoming metabolically torpid and less active (Woodbury and Hardy 1948; Nussear, Esque et al. 2007). Furthermore, the Western Mojave had not experienced significant rainfall since March 2008, and a likely strategy for tortoises would be to minimize activity. Repeating the experiment in the spring when tortoises have access to annual vegetation is an important next step. It is anticipated there will be seasonal differences in movement patterns, and that an increased number of tortoises will navigate home in the spring season. A comprehensive understanding of desert tortoise homing behavior will greatly improve success rates of translocation actions and as a result, improve the effective management of desert tortoises.

Translocations of threatened and endangered species are becoming more common as habitat loss increases. Although the success rate of herpetofaunal translocations has increased, improvements are still needed (Germano and Bishop 2009). The compounding effects of disease, habitat loss, predation and climate change have substantially impacted desert tortoises and the population continues to decline despite federal protection since 1990 (Woodbury and Hardy 1948; Berry 1995; Berry and Van Abbema 1997; Berry, Spangenberg et al. 2002; Christopher, Berry et al. 2003; Bjurlin and Bissonette 2004). The 2008 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Draft Recovery Plan for the desert tortoise acknowledges the vast majority of threats to the desert tortoises and its habitat are associated with human land uses (USFWS 2008) and the western Mojave population of tortoises is particularly vulnerable; it has been argued that the NTC military expansion could have a severe effect on the long term population viability of desert tortoises, by impacting up to 13% of the western Mojave population (Doak, Kareiva et al. 1994). Understanding the extent to which tortoises are able to navigate across a landscape, back to their source location, is essential to effectively manage a translocated population, and the extent of this impact will be determined by the future management of the habitat and of the tortoise population from this point forward.

REFERENCES

- Berry, K. H. (1995). "The status of the desert tortoise and conservation efforts in the United States." Publicaciones de la Sociedad Herpetologica Mexicana **2**: 21-25.
- Berry, K. H., E. K. Spangenberg, et al. (2002). "Deaths of desert tortoises following periods of drought and research manipulation." Chelonian Conservation and Biology **4**(2): 436-448.
- Berry, K. H. and J. Van Abbema (1997). "The desert tortoise recovery plan: an ambitious effort to conserve biodiversity in the Mojave and Colorado deserts of the United States." Proceedings: conservation, restoration, and management of tortoises and turtles - an international conference 11-16 July 1993, State University of New York, Purchase, New York, USA.: 430-440.
- Bertolero, A., D. Oro, et al. (2007). "Assessing the efficacy of reintroduction programmes by modelling adult survival: the example of Hermann's tortoise." Animal Conservation **10**(3): 360-368.
- Bjurlin, C. D. and J. A. Bissonette (2004). "Survival during Early Life Stages of the Desert Tortoise (*Gopherus agassizii*) in the South-Central Mojave Desert." Journal of Herpetology **Vol. 38**(4): 527-535.
- Carroll, T. E. and D. W. Ehrenfeld (1978). "Intermediate range homing in wood turtle, *Clemmys insculpta*." Copeia(1): 117-126.
- Christopher, M. M., K. H. Berry, et al. (2003). "Clinical disease and laboratory abnormalities in free-ranging desert tortoises in California (1990-1995)." Journal of Wildlife Diseases **39**(1): 35-56.
- Doak, D., P. Kareiva, et al. (1994). "Modeling population viability for the desert tortoise in the western Mojave desert." Ecological Applications **4**(3): 446-460.
- Dodd, C. K. and R. A. Seigel (1991). "Relocation, repatriation, and translocation of amphibians and reptiles - Are they conservation strategies that work." Herpetologica **47**(3): 336-350.
- Emlen, S. T. (1969). "Homing ability and orientation in painted turtle *Chrysemys picta marginata*." Behaviour **33**: 58-&.
- Field, K. J., C. R. Tracy, et al. (2007). "Return to the wild: Translocation as a tool in conservation of the Desert Tortoise (*Gopherus agassizii*)." Biological Conservation **136**(2): 232-245.
- Germano, J. M. and P. J. Bishop (2009). "Suitability of Amphibians and Reptiles for Translocation." Conservation Biology **23**(1): 7-15.
- Gould, E. (1957). "Orientation in box turtles, *Terrapene c. carolina* (Linnaeus)" Biological Bulletin **112**(3): 336-348.
- Griffith, B., J. M. Scott, et al. (1989). "Translocation as a species conservation tool - status and strategy." Science **245**(4917): 477-480.
- Harless, M. L., A. D. Walde, et al. (2009). "Home Range, Spatial Overlap, and Burrow Use of the Desert Tortoise in the West Mojave Desert." Copeia(2): 378-389.
- Heaton, J. S., K. E. Nussear, et al. (2008). "Spatially explicit decision support for selecting translocation areas for Mojave desert tortoises." Biodiversity and Conservation **17**(3): 575-590.
- Lebboroni, M. and G. Chelazzi (2000). "Waterward orientation and homing after experimental displacement in the European Pond Turtle, *Emys orbicularis*." Ethology Ecology & Evolution **12**(1): 83-88.

- Nussear, K. E., T. C. Esque, et al. (2007). "Desert Tortoise hibernation: Temperatures, timing, and environment." Copeia(2): 378-386.
- O'Connor, M. P., L. C. Zimmerman, et al. (1994). "Home range size and movements by desert tortoises, *Gopherus agassizii*, in the eastern Mojave Desert." Herpetological Monographs **0**(8): 60-71.
- Public Law, -. (2002). "Bob Stump National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2003. Incorporates by reference Title XXIX Fort Irwin Military Lands Withdrawl Act of 2001."
- Rittenhouse, C. D., J. J. Millspaugh, et al. (2007). "Movements of translocated and resident three-toed box turtles." Journal of Herpetology **41**(1): 115-121.
- Smar, C. M. and R. M. Chambers (2005). "Homing behavior of Musk Turtles in a Virginia lake." Southeastern Naturalist **4**(3): 527-532.
- Sullivan, B. K., M. A. Kwiatkowski, et al. (2004). "Translocation of urban Gila Monsters: a problematic conservation tool." Biological Conservation **117**(3): 235-242.
- Teixeira, C. P., C. S. De Azevedo, et al. (2007). "Revisiting translocation and reintroduction programmes: the importance of considering stress." Animal Behaviour **73**: 1-13.
- USFWS (1994). "Endangered and threatened wildlife and plants: proposed determination of critical habitat for the Mojave population of the desert tortoise." 50 CFR 17(Federal registry 58): 45748-45768.
- USFWS (2008). "Draft revised recovery plan for the Mojave population of the desert tortoise (*Gopherus agassizii*)." U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, California and Nevada Region, Sacramento, California. 209 pp.
- Woodbury, A. M. and R. Hardy (1948). "Studies of the desert tortoise, *Gopherus agassizii*." Ecological Monographs **18**(2): 145-200.

APPENDIX I

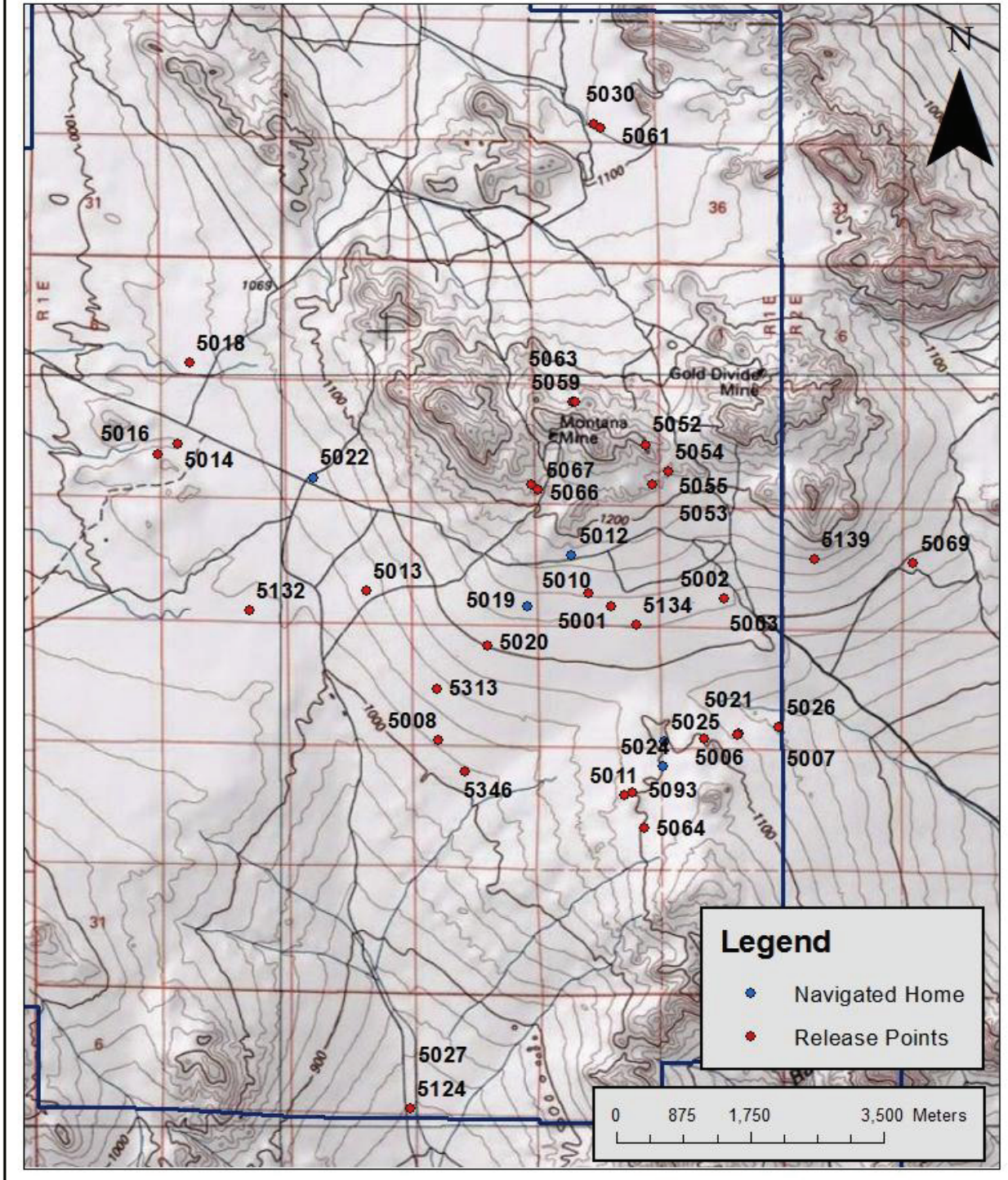


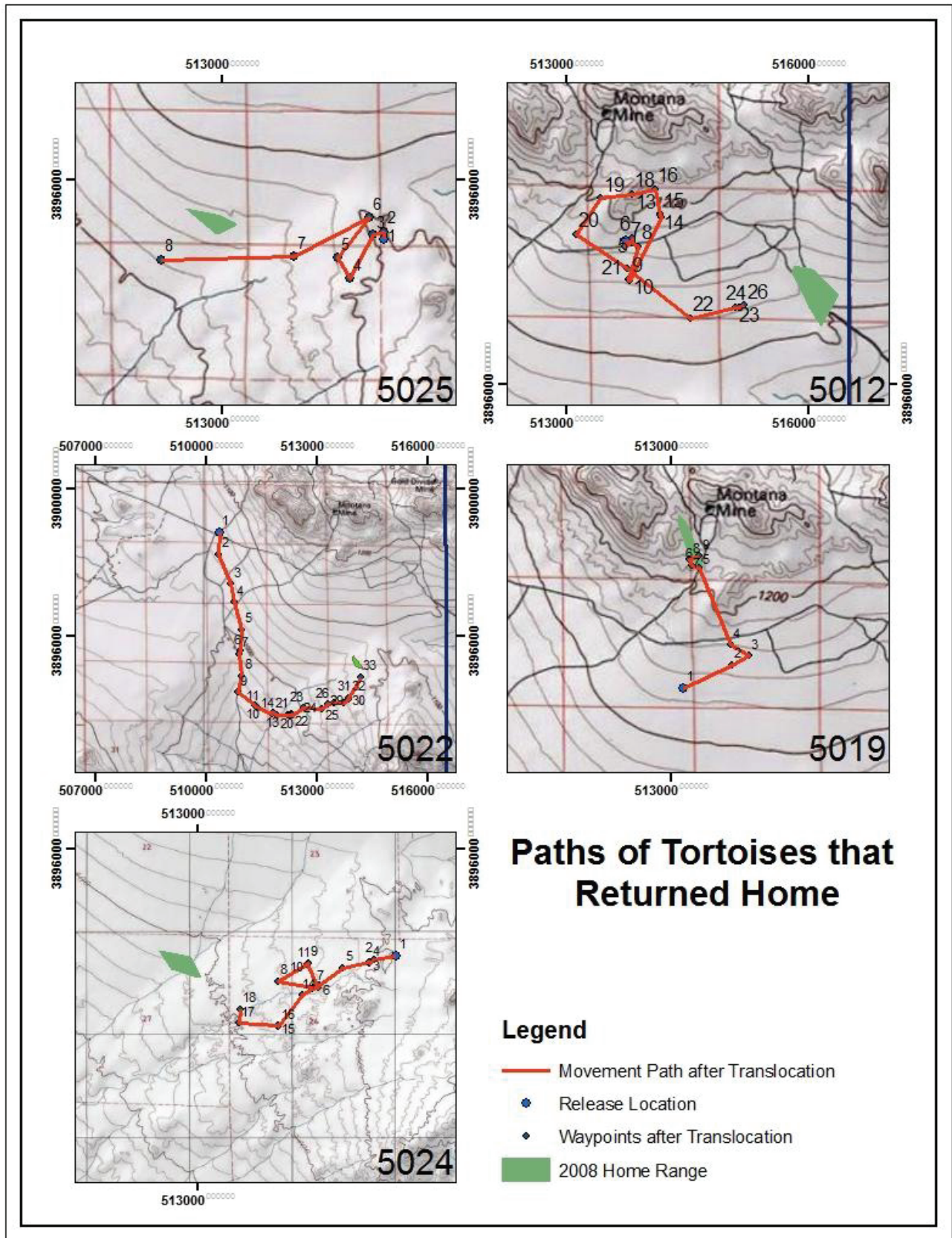
APPENDIX II

Tortoise ID	Sex	MCL	Distance Displaced	Experimental Group	Date Handled1	Date Handled2	Date Tortoise Navigated Home	Total Distance Traveled	Voided
5001	Female	225	2	TRANSLOCATED	21-Sep-09	28-Oct-09		1527.60	n
5002	Female	221	0	CONTROL				76.73	n
5003	Male	259	0	CONTROL				850.02	n
5006	Female	252	0	HANDLING	21-Sep-09			416.38	n
5007	Male	268	0	HANDLING	3-Oct-09			88.02	n
5008	Female	237	4	TRANSLOCATED	21-Sep-09	27-Oct-09		4887.81	n
5010	Male	260	2	TRANSLOCATED	22-Sep-09	27-Oct-09		4931.75	n
5011	Female	232	0	CONTROL				472.16	n
5012	Male	211	2	TRANSLOCATED	21-Sep-09		14-Oct-09	9526.50	y
5013	Male	264	5	TRANSLOCATED	21-Sep-09	27-Oct-09		11101.20	n
5014	Female	227	8	TRANSLOCATED	21-Sep-09	27-Oct-09		4674.97	n
5016	Male	260	8	TRANSLOCATED	21-Sep-09	27-Oct-09		5727.61	n
5018	Female	240	5	TRANSLOCATED	22-Sep-09	27-Oct-09		6257.57	y
5019	Male	276	2	TRANSLOCATED	22-Sep-09		2-Oct-09	3880.66	n
5020	Female	239	2	TRANSLOCATED	22-Sep-09			2982.85	y
5021	Male	236	0	CONTROL				168.04	n
5022	Male	266	5	TRANSLOCATED	22-Sep-09	27-Oct-09	27-Oct-09	8526.15	n
5024	Female	232	2	TRANSLOCATED	23-Sep-09		12-Oct-09	2933.06	n
5025	Male	225	2	TRANSLOCATED	23-Sep-09	30-Oct-09	29-Sep-09	5323.67	n
5026	Male	277	4	TRANSLOCATED	23-Sep-09	27-Oct-09		9982.35	n
5027	Male	278	8	TRANSLOCATED	23-Sep-09	28-Oct-09		4546.60	n
5030	Female	210	3	TRANSLOCATED	22-Sep-09	25-Oct-09		2259.85	y
5052	Female	251	0	HANDLING	2-Oct-09			535.19	n
5053	Male	272	0	HANDLING	21-Sep-09			3594.14	n
5054	Female	235	0	HANDLING	24-Sep-09			607.69	n
5055	Female	246	0	HANDLING	23-Sep-09			787.66	y
5059	Male	276	0	CONTROL				1593.23	n
5061	Male	288	2	TRANSLOCATED	22-Sep-09	25-Oct-09		9670.25	n
5063	Male	270	0	CONTROL				1746.13	n
5064	Male	288	5	TRANSLOCATED	23-Sep-09	27-Oct-09		8467.07	n
5066	Male	242	0	HANDLING	23-Sep-09			7548.34	y
5067	Female	242	0	HANDLING	23-Sep-09			1181.40	n
5069	Male	267	8	TRANSLOCATED	1-Oct-09			3296.14	n
5093	Female	244	0	CONTROL				820.79	n
5124	Female	215	8	TRANSLOCATED	23-Sep-09	28-Oct-09		6484.02	y
5132	Male	285	0	HANDLING	3-Oct-09			67.20	n
5134	Female	254	5	TRANSLOCATED	1-Oct-09	27-Oct-09		8018.02	n
5139	Female	234	8	TRANSLOCATED	1-Oct-09	27-Oct-09		6835.45	y
5313	Female	240	2	TRANSLOCATED	1-Oct-09	27-Oct-09		232.37	n
5346	Male	242	0	CONTROL				2398.34	n

APPENDIX III

WEA Homing Experiment Tortoise Release Locations Sept 2009





Calico Solar – 08-AFC-13
DECLARATION OF SERVICE

I, Carol Horton, declare that on August 5, 2010, I served and filed copies of the attached CALIFORNIA UNIONS FOR RELIABLE ENERGY EXHIBIT 439, 2008 and 2009 ANNUAL REPORTS FOR THE FORT IRWIN TRANSLOCATION PROJECT, dated August 5, 2010. The original document, filed with the Docket Unit, is accompanied by a copy of the most recent Proof of Service list, located on the web page for this project at www.energy.ca.gov/sitingcases/calicosolar/CalicoSolar_POS.pdf. The document has been sent to both the other parties in this proceeding as shown on the Proof of Service list and to the Commission's Docket Unit electronically to all email addresses on the Proof of Service list; and by depositing in the U.S. mail at Sacramento, CA, with first-class postage thereon fully prepaid and addressed as provided on the Proof of Service list to those addresses NOT marked "email preferred."

AND

By sending an original paper copy and one electronic copy, mailed and emailed respectively to:

CALIFORNIA ENERGY COMMISSION

Attn: Docket No. 08-AFC-13
1516 Ninth Street, MS 4
Sacramento, CA 95814-5512
docket@energy.state.us.ca.

I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct. Executed at Sacramento, CA, on August 5, 2010

/s/
Carol Horton

CALIFORNIA ENERGY COMMISSION
Attn: Docket No. 08AFC13
1516 Ninth Street, MS-4
Sacramento, CA 95184
docket@energy.state.us.ca

Felicia Bellows
Vice President, Development
Tessera Solar
4800 North Scottsdale Road
Suite 5500
Scottsdale, AZ 85251
Felicia.bellows@tesseractosolar.com

Gloria D. Smith, Sr. Atty.
Sierra Club
85 Second Street, 2nd Flr.
San Francisco, CA 94105
Gloria.smith@sierraclub.org

Angela Leiba
AFC Project Manager
URS Corporation
1615 Murray Canyon Rd., #1000
San Diego, CA 92108
Angela_Leiba@URSCorp.com

Allan J. Thompson
Attorney at Law
21 C Orinda Way #314
Orinda, CA 94563
allanori@comcast.net

Jim Stobaugh
BLM-Nevada State Office
PO Box 12000
Reno, NV 89520
Jim_stobaugh@blm.gov

Rich Rotte, Project Mgr.
Bureau of Land Management
Barstow Field Office
2601 Barstow Road
Barstow, CA 92311
Richard_Rotte@blm.gov

Anthony Eggert
Commissioner & Presiding Member
California Energy Commission
1516 Ninth Street
Sacramento, CA 95814
aeggert@energy.state.ca.us

Jeffrey D. Byron
Commissioner & Associate Member
California Energy Commission
1516 Ninth Street
Sacramento, CA 95814
jbyron@energy.state.ca.us

Paul Kramer
Hearing Officer
California Energy Commission
1516 Ninth Street
Sacramento, CA 95814
pkramer@energy.state.ca.us

Caryn Holmes
Staff Counsel
California Energy Commission
1516 Ninth Street MS-14
Sacramento, CA 95814
cholmes@energy.state.ca.us

Christopher Meyer
Project Manager
California Energy Commission
1516 Ninth Street
Sacramento, CA 95814
cmeyer@energy.state.ca.us

Ella Foley Gannon, Partner
Bingham McCutchen, LLP
Three Embarcadero Center
San Francisco, CA 94111
Ella.gannon@bingham.com

Loulena Miles
Adams Broadwell Joseph & Cardozo
601 Gateway Boulevard, Suite 1000
South San Francisco, CA 94080
lmiles@adamsbroadwell.com

Becky Jones
California Department of Fish &
Game
36431 41st Street East
Palmdale, CA 93552
dfgpalm@adelphia.net

Basin & Range Watch
Laura Cunningham
Kevin Emmerich
PO Box 70
Beatty, NV 89003
atmoictoadranch@netzero.net

Patrick C. Jackson
E-MAIL PREFERRED
ochsjack@earthlink.net

California ISO
e-recipient@caiso.com

Defenders of Wildlife
Joshua Basofin
EMAIL PREFERRED
jbasonfin@defenders.org

Kristy Chew, Adviser to
Commissioner Byron
EMAIL PREFERRED
kchew@energy.state.ca.us

Society for the Conservation of
Bighorn Sheep
Bob Burke & Gary Thomas
PO Box 1407
Yermo, CA 92398
Cameracoordinator@
sheepsociety.com

Steve Adams, Co-Staff Counsel
California Energy Commission
1516 Ninth Street
Sacramento, CA 95814
sadams@energy.state.ca.us

Jennifer Jennings
California Energy Commission
1516 Ninth Street
Sacramento, CA 95814
publicadviser@energy.state.ca.us

County of San Bernardino
Ruth E. Stringer, Co. Counsel
Bart W. Brizzee, Dpty. Co.Co.
385 N. Arrowhead Ave., 4th Flr.
San Bernardino, CA 92415-0140
bbrizzee@cc.sbcounty.gov

Newberry Community Service District
Wayne W. Weierbach
PO box 206
Newberry Springs, CA 92365
newberryCSD@gmail.com

Lorraine White, Adviser to
Commissioner Eggert
EMAIL PREFERRED
lwhite@energy.state.ca.us

Cynthia Lea Burch
Steven A. Lamb
Anne Alexander
Katten Muchin Rosenman LLP
2029 Century Park East, Ste 2700
Los Angeles, CA 90067-3012

e-recipient@caiso.com