

# Desert Tortoise

## DINOSAUR OF THE DESERT



### KEEP WILD TORTOISES WILD

Removing tortoises from the wild is illegal and depletes wild tortoise populations.

### KEEP CAPTIVE TORTOISES CAPTIVE

Releasing captive tortoises into the wild is illegal, spreads disease to wild tortoises, and displaces resident tortoises.

### DO NOT BREED CAPTIVE DESERT TORTOISES

Backyard breeding hurts conservation efforts and produces an overabundance of unwanted captive tortoises.

### STAY ON TRAILS

Ride responsibly to avoid degrading tortoise habitat and causing injury or death to a tortoise.

### OBSERVE, BUT AVOID CONTACT

Do not pick up a wild desert tortoise. If a tortoise is in danger of being hit by a car, gently lift it up and place it out of harm's way, facing the same direction it was heading.

If you are interested in adopting a desert tortoise, or can no longer care for your captive desert tortoise, visit [www.azgfd.gov/tortoise](http://www.azgfd.gov/tortoise).



[www.azgfd.gov](http://www.azgfd.gov)

5000 W. Carefree Highway • Phoenix, AZ 85086-5000  
(602) 942-3000

Desert tortoises can go a year without drinking by storing water in their bladder. • Tortoise burrows are used by many other species, including Gila monsters, rattlesnakes, packrats, and insects. • Desert tortoises mature at 15-20 years old.

Hibernating desert tortoises slow their metabolism to minimize energy loss. • Desert tortoises have bacteria in their hindgut that breaks down plant material. • Desert tortoises are protected throughout their range.

PHOTO BY PAUL CONDON