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**Ft. Irwin Land Expansion and
Desert Tortoise Translocation**



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Background:

- 2000 – Congress approves land expansion
- 2004 USFWS gives land expansion Biological Opinion
- 2006 USFWS gives translocation Biological Opinion
- 2007 Army began initial translocation efforts

The translocation is being conducted as a scientifically-based research and monitoring program, guided by a peer-reviewed translocation plan developed by the U.S. Geological Survey.



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Current Status: SOUTHERN EXPANSION AREA

Spring 2008 -- 556 desert tortoises translocated to date



Future plans:

1. Approximately 100 tortoises remain in the SEA—plans to relocate early fall 2008
2. Desert tortoise fence damage



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Current Status: WESTERN EXPANSION AREA

- Spring 2008 -- initial desert tortoise surveys begun
- Researchers found many more tortoises than original estimate

Future plans:

1. Fall 2008 – massive survey efforts in the WEA
2. Desert tortoise fencing
3. USGS will write translocation plan amendment for the WEA
 - Translocation site selection
 - Survey methodology
 - Translocation procedures





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Translocation Research and Monitoring:

400 translocated and 350 resident and “control” tortoises from the SEA have been allocated to an intensive monitoring program and several research projects:

- Physiological stresses due to translocation
- Health of translocated tortoises over time
- Various aspects of the translocation process itself



**Monitoring efforts and research activities
for all projects are ongoing**



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Measures of success:

The ultimate measure of success

- DNA profiling to identify the recruitment of translocated tortoises into the host population.



An immediate measure of success

- Reproductive activity
- Researchers have found HIGH reproductive activity in translocated tortoises



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Current Status:

COYOTE PREDATION

Pre-translocation depredations – 48 tortoises

Post-translocation depredations – 93 tortoises

- Resident/control – 40 dead / 360 resident tortoises (11.1%)
- Translocated – 53 dead / 411 translocated tortoises (12.9%)



Future Plans:

USDA Wildlife Services will attempt to remove coyotes

Most prudent scientific methods will be used to control predation



ENVIRONMENTAL DIVISION



Questions??

