INFORMATION HANDOUT

FOR

PROTECTION

OF THE

DESERT TORTOISE

Project: AADD 08-0P1201

Caltrans

Information Brochure

Protection
Of the
DESERT TORTOISE
(Gopherus agassizii)

During

LIMITED SCOPE PROJECTS

THE

DESERT TORTOISE

(A THREATENED SPECIES)

"IS PROTECTED BY LAW"

**ANY UNAUTHORIZED PERSON
WHO COLLECTS, HANDLES
OR DELIBERATELY MOLESTS A
TORTOISE
CAN
BE
PROSECUTED**

VIOLATIONS CAN RESULT IN

1) FINES UP TO $50,000

AND/OR

2) IMPRISONMENT UP TO 1 YEAR

APPLICABLE LAWS INCLUDE:

The Federal Endangered Species Act of 1973
(16 U.S.C. 1531-1543)

and

The California Endangered Species Act

THIS BROCHURE IS INTENDED TO PROVIDE YOU WITH INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE TO AVOID VIOLATION OF THE ENDANGERED SPECIES ACTS

RESOURCE AGENCY FORMAL CONSULTATION

Limited scope projects normally have a low risk of encountering or harming a tortoise and no "TAKE" is anticipated. Therefore, Formal Consultation between Caltrans and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service under Section 7 of the federal Endangered Species Act has not been undertaken for this project to authorize "TAKE" during the conduct of this project.

"TAKE" is defined as:

Harassing, Harming, Pursuing, Hunting, Shooting, Wounding, Killing, Capturing, Collecting, or attempting to engage in any such conduct. Engaging in any of these activities can place you in violation of the law.

Tortoises found within Caltrans Right of Way are not exempt from this protection.

WHAT TO DO AND NOT DO.

CHECK UNDER MOTORIZED EQUIPMENT & VEHICLES – that have been parked over night or stationary for some length of time before moving the vehicle.

CHECK AROUND MATERIAL STACKS & UNITS - that have been stored in the open before moving them.

VISUALLY CHECK AROUND THE WORK AREA – for the presence of live tortoise that may have wandered into the disturbance zone. It is not intended to divert your attention from your work tasks and create a hazard for your or others on the job, but it is good practice to utilize a few seconds and visually scan the area around you when it is safe to do so.

IF A TORTOISE IS PRESENT – stop all work activities that could harm the tortoise and contact the Resident Engineer or designated contact person, or on-site biologist to have the tortoise removed to safety. Contact your supervisor (contractor's) for direction on proceeding with work activities.

DO NOT HANDLE OR MOVE A TORTOISE – yourself. Only a qualified biologist is authorized to do so.

DO NOT RETURN A TORTOISE – to the wild that has been held in captivity. They may have been infected with a pneumonia type virus that is the cause of pneumonia infections in humans. The tortoise is highly susceptible to this virus which attacks the lungs and the tortoise has no means to cure itself. More tortoises die from pneumonia than any other cause. Symptoms of infection include runny or bubbly nose, loss of appetite and gasping for breath. Returning them to the wild increases the potential for exposure of the virus into an otherwise healthy tortoise population.

HELP MAKE THE LITTER CONTROL REQUIREMENTS ON THIS PROJECT – work by using the closeable trash containers to dispose of left over food scraps, wrappers, cans bottles, etc., or secure and remove them from the project with you when you leave the job site. The purpose of litter control is to avoid attracting Ravens which are highly efficient hunters and killers of baby tortoises.

DO NOT NEEDLESSLY VENTURE OUT OF THE DESIGNATED WORK AREA – into adjoining habitat areas unless directed to do so after the area has been approved for such activity. Doing so, disturbs habitat which is also protected under the Endangered Species Acts.

ASK YOUR SUPERVISOR - if any other environmentally related special provisions have been placed in the contract exist that you should know about. We do recommend that environmental protection measures be reiterated and discussed at on-site "tail gate" meetings with safety and other project related issues brought up by your supervisor(s).

WE THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION AND CARE

IN KEEPING WITH AMERICA'S DESIRE TO PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT