



Desert Tortoise *Gopherus agassizii*

Description: The top shell, or carapace, is usually brown or gray without pattern. It is large and domed to give sufficient space for its lungs and efficient thermoregulation. Will weigh 8-15 pounds and grow to a length of 8-15 inches.

Habitat: Lives in different types, from sandy flats to rocky foothills. Ground temperatures can exceed 140 degrees Fahrenheit.

Range: Mojave and Sonoran Deserts of the southwestern United States and northwestern Mexico, also the Sinaloan thorn scrub of northwestern Mexico.

Natural diet: Grasses, flowers, fruit, and cacti.

Zoo diet: Fresh produce and alfalfa.

Life span: Lives 35 years in the wild and 50-100 years in captivity.

Behavior: Will vocalize or head bob for communication or to attract a female's attention.

Reproduction: Males fight for the privilege of mating by trying to flip over other males. Eggs are laid May to July and hatchlings emerge in mid-August to October.

Conservation Status: Vulnerable.



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