



## 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.



**Z**Amarillo  
**ZOO**