



## WHAT'S IN THIS ISSUE OF TORTOISE GROUP NEWS?

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**THANK YOU to the many volunteer contributors for this edition of Tortoise Group News.**

Tortoise Group depends on the efforts of amazing volunteers to help improve the lives of pet tortoises and protect the wild population. There are many opportunities to share your talents with TG. To get started, complete an interest form at [tortoisegroup.org/volunteer/](http://tortoisegroup.org/volunteer/) or email Amber at [amberroche@tortoisegroup.org](mailto:amberroche@tortoisegroup.org)



Tortoise Group educates and advocates for the protection and well-being of the desert tortoise.

*Tortoise Group is a non-profit, 501(c)(3) organization since 1982.*

## SPRINGTIME TIPS

Spring weather may be tricky for tortoise custodians, but our desert tortoises know what they are doing! While we all enjoy the springtime weather, here are some tips that can help you and your tortoise adjust to some weekly climate changes as we move into March and out of brumation.



- ☀️ Your tortoise will start to stir when temperatures reach 70 – 80 degrees. She may come out one day, but not the next...that's normal. She may come out and just bask in the sun...that's normal. She may even come out of the burrow and find a new place to hide for the first month...that's normal too! Keep a calendar from year to year to see what's "normal" for your tortoise.
  - ❄️ Northern Nevada tortoises may still need to be housed at night if the temperatures drop below 40 degrees or get too windy.
- ☀️ Hydration and drinking is the priority for your tortoise after brumation is complete and he has warmed up. Offer your tortoise a lukewarm bath after you're sure he's awake. The water should be high enough to cover the bottom part of the shell but low enough that he can stand up and raise his head above the water level to let you know when he is done drinking. Some tortoises only stay submerged for a few minutes, while other tortoises enjoy a luxurious 20-30 minute soak!
  - ❄️ Your tortoise may have a chunky white discharge in his urine after his soak. That's urate salts and it is very healthy for these to be expelled in the urine. It actually prevents the tortoise from forming urinary stones or uroliths!
- ☀️ Feeding is secondary to hydration. Let your tortoise browse around the yard and graze before offering tortoise food. A tortoise in the spring will be cold and needs to warm up in the sun so they can metabolize their food properly. Don't be alarmed if they are not ready to eat right away.
  - ❄️ Remember to only offer your tortoise safe plants and no fruits. They cannot metabolize the sugars. Refer to TG Care Sheets on our website for lists of plants and flowers that desert tortoises love!

Take a good look at your tortoise. If you think she is sick or notice any bubbles coming out of her nose, don't panic! It's just time for a trip to the vet. With proper treatment, food and access to water, you'll be able to help your pet recover and live a long and healthy life.

## A NOTE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR...

I'm very excited for 2016. Our mission is to educate and advocate on behalf of the desert tortoise, and one of the ways we do this is by facilitating adoptions in the state of Nevada. Tortoise Group has such a long-standing reputation for quality adoptions that the state of Nevada has made Tortoise Group the sole facilitator of adoptions in our state. This is a great honor, but a great responsibility as well.

There are literally thousands of tortoises bred in captivity that need new, loving and nurturing homes. I have committed Tortoise Group to handle a minimum of 100 adoptions in 2016, as well as continue on the important work Kathy Utiger started in years past. We will be at fairs and expos throughout the state; we are beginning partnerships with agencies like Springs Preserve and the Las Vegas Natural History Museum; and we will be hosting micro-chipping and sterilization clinics throughout the year. Look for Tortoise Group's adoption campaign beginning in April and join us on our Facebook and Twitter sites. We want to hear from you.

All of this is not possible without the vital work of our dedicated volunteers. If you have considered becoming a volunteer, please do so now. Without your help, realizing our goal of adopting 100 tortoises into quality habitats and loving homes is impossible. You can help by donating, volunteering, and of course, by adopting a tortoise!



I look forward to serving this organization with our dedicated staff and volunteers this year.

Thank you once again,  
Kobbe Shaw  
Executive Director

**Remember to soften your tortoise food with water until it is a juicy mash. Do not feed them dry pellets. Form it into a wedge for easy biting! Yuummmmy!!!**



## Tortoise Food Satellite Sellers

Is your tortoise hungry? Please contact sellers directly to pick up Tortoise Food. TG Members receive a discount and a percentage of each sale benefits Tortoise Group. Thank you for caring for your tortoise and supporting the efforts of Tortoise Group.

Nellis & Owens.....Georgi (702)459-1274  
Durango & Grand Teton.....Cathy (702)339-5012  
Craig & Cimmaron.....Annie (702)306-5096  
Decatur & Gowan.....Toni (702)277-6179  
Rainbow & Charleston.....Jamie (702)232-6289  
Charleston & Casino Center...Trilla (702)528-2237  
2-15 & W Tropicana.....Athena (702)682-0307  
2-15 & S Decatur.....Carolyn (702)378-6514  
2-15 & Windmill.....Diana (801)510-3526  
Russell & Pecos.....Sherri (702)339-9821  
I-15 & Blue Diamond..... Shirl (702)338-5231  
Lake Mead & Van Wagenen..Peggy (702)281-3048  
Boulder City.....Carol (702)293-6494  
Pahrump.....Sheri (775)727-5557  
Sparks.....Kym (775)762-3418  
S. Reno.....Tonya (775)813-0050  
Gardnerville.....Tricia (775)450-2259

**You can also shop at our online store 24/7  
[tortoisegroup.org](http://tortoisegroup.org)**

No computer? Call Susan (702)458-8382

### Business Locations

(Member pricing not available – tax added to price)

#### *Boca Park Animal Hospital*

Charleston & Rampart.....(702)675-7000

#### *Creature Comforts Animal Hospital*

Ann Rd & US-95.....(702)658-7339

#### *Lone Mountain Animal Hospital*

Rainbow & US-95.....(702)645-3116

#### *Aloha Animal Hospital*

S Torrey Pines & Warm Springs.....(702)567-5222

#### *Reptiles-N-Reefs*

Stephanie & Sunset.....(702)565-7333

#### *Moon Sun Landscapes*

Russell & Boulder Highway.....(702)645-2032

## Boosting adoptions for 2016! We NEED your help!

With all the desert tortoises beginning to peak out of brumation comes the start of adoption season as well! With an updated, constantly growing list for 2016 of approximately 140 desert tortoises, Tortoise Group is boosting its efforts to maximize adoptions. Tortoise Group has set a goal of 100 adoptions with 20 of the adopted tortoises to be sterilized prior to adoption. This is the first step to moving in the direction of every tortoise adopted out being sterilized in the future to prevent backyard breeding!

How **YOU** can help:

**Add to your family!** If you don't already have a pet desert tortoise and have a backyard you can build a tortoise habitat in, think about desert tortoise adoption! Desert tortoises are wonderful, easy-to-care for pets! Give one a home today!

**Spread the word!** Help us spread the word to your friends, neighbors, and people in the community on how rewarding it is to have a pet desert tortoise and encourage them to adopt through Tortoise Group!

**Give and support!** Donate a gift or your time volunteering to support Tortoise Group! Tortoise Group is successful because of our volunteers and support from people like you! Help us to guide future families in creating safe, lovely habitats for homeless pet desert tortoises!



**Help us end pet desert tortoise overpopulation.  
Always separate a breeding pair.**

## ADOPTABLE TORTOISE *SHELDON*



Sheldon was abandoned the summer of 2014. Sheldon is a unique case with special needs. He walks with a bit of a limp and has a very distinct shell shape.

He would do best in a generally flat backyard desert tortoise habitat.

Sheldon is one example of many homeless pet desert tortoises available for adoption. Just like any other desert tortoise, Sheldon is a gentle pet that enjoys munching on desert willow blossoms. Give Sheldon a home in your backyard today!



**Visit TortoiseGroup.org today to get the adoption process started and be on your way to desert tortoise custodianship.**

## FEATURED TORTOISE *MOHAVE*



Mohave is one and half years old and resides in a beautiful backyard habitat complete with a cozy underground burrow in Los Angeles, CA. Mohave was gifted into her new home a year ago by a local couple. Her favorite treats are hibiscus flowers and desert globe mallow flowers. Her loving family submitted this picture to be featured as part of our ***Tortoise Tuesdays*** on Tortoise Group social media. Needless to say, this cute little tortoise was a hit reaching nearly 2500 people on Facebook! Submit pictures of your tortoise to be featured on Tortoise Tuesdays to [info@tortoisegroup.org](mailto:info@tortoisegroup.org) or through any of our social media outlets.

Golden Tortoise Society Members can be assured their beloved desert tortoise pet will be cared for and adopted to a loving home following the custodian's death if no person is designated or able to provide their care. Contact [info@tortoisegroup.org](mailto:info@tortoisegroup.org) for a free consultation with a local estate planning attorney.

Thank you  
Tortoise Group Partners



## WHERE IS SHE NOW? JANINA LITTLE, BIOLOGICAL MONITOR

Land development projects, such as solar, pipeline, and highway projects continuously occur in the Mojave Desert outside city limits. In September 2015, Janina Little embarked on a position as a Biological Monitor whose focus is on wild desert tortoise conservation. As desert tortoises are a state and federally protected species, precautions are made to limit casualties from construction. Biologists are engaged for construction projects to ensure that contractors comply with mitigation measures prescribed by government agencies such as the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS).

As a Biological Monitor, Janina's priority is to ensure no tortoises or wildlife are harmed during construction activities. A biological team will assemble and search for tortoises ahead of construction, and then move them out of the way before construction begins. Most projects are required to install tortoise exclusion fencing in order to keep tortoises away from construction. Biological Monitors make sure this fencing is erected properly, will check it routinely to repair any portions degraded from rain, erosion or off road vehicle vandalism. Biologists also check under heavy equipment as tortoises will use the shade of equipment as temporary shelters. If a tortoise is located, Biologists record its health and may mark the tortoise for future identification. Radio transmitters can be placed on the tortoise in order to track its movement in the future. After proper handling, the tortoise is placed within a USFWS prescribed distance away from the project area in the best suitable habitat, inside of a burrow and near ideal tortoise foragable plants

Janina doesn't just look for tortoises. Bighorn sheep, protected and nesting birds, coyotes, ravens, kit foxes, and cacti are recorded, tracked and if possible, removed from the construction zone. Other environmental concerns such as the accidental chemical spill and litter are addressed, tracked and mitigated. Biological Monitors continuously educate every construction worker about the biology, laws and the onsite precautions to help the desert tortoise. Most workers are excited to learn that there is a concerted effort to help protect not only the desert tortoise but the surrounding environment for our future generations. Many construction workers have adopted a desert tortoise and tell terrific tortoise stories of their own!



## SARAH MORTIMER, TORTOISE GROUP ADOPTION COORDINATOR

Sarah joined Tortoise Group in September 2015 and serves as the Adoption Coordinator. She received her Bachelor of Science degree in biology with an emphasis in zoology from Northern Arizona University. Sarah has always had a love for animals and an interest in nature. She studied locomotion and limb morphology in mice for her undergraduate research project. She is very excited to work with desert tortoises adopting them to wonderful new custodians. Her passion for animals makes it simple for her to be enthusiastic about educating the public about desert tortoises! In her free time, Sarah loves being outdoors hiking, camping and rock hounding with her pup, Gladys.



## SPRINGTIME TIPS FOR NORTHERN NEVADA

The weather in Northern Nevada has been confusing both to tortoises and their custodians! Most tortoises stayed up way past their bedtime – all the way until the end of October!! Now the weather has been in the 60s and 70s already which is unusually warm. Northern Nevada tortoises do best when the temperature is between 40 and 50 degrees. Many custodians keep a thermometer in their winter container so they can check on them, keeping them in the coolest place possible during the day and even covering their container with a blanket if the night time temperature drops below 40 degrees.

When your Northern Nevada tortoise starts to scratch or tries to crawl out, it's time to give them a warm soak in tepid water and  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup electrolyte solution for 10-15 minutes. Make sure they are completely dry in case they want to go back to sleep. Once they are completely out of brumation and the temperature is above 60 degrees, they can be moved to their outside burrow. This is the time when they will start grazing and you can consider feeding them tortoise chow. You can look for the closest TG Seller on page 2 of this newsletter or at [TortoiseGroup.org](http://TortoiseGroup.org) and ask any of these friendly tortoise custodians about caring for your tortoise in Northern Nevada.



## TIPS FOR EVERY BACKYARD HABITAT

- Check for places where your tortoise might get stuck, including areas where he can climb and flip over.
- Make sure your fences and gate barriers are sturdy, strong and have no gaps. A lost tortoise is a very hard to find!



# UPCOMING EVENTS 2016

## TORTOISE GROUP GENERAL MEETINGS SOUTHERN NEVADA

April 16  
May 21  
June 18  
July 16  
August 20  
September 17

Please visit [TortoiseGroup.org](http://TortoiseGroup.org) for locations and times of upcoming meetings

## OTHER EVENTS

- March 19: Volunteer Master Training Workshop Make-up Session, Las Vegas
- March 31: Northern Nevada TG Activities
- April 24: Las Vegas Earth Day
- May 14: Microchipping Clinic
- June 22: Start of Sterilization Clinic
- Sept 10: Microchipping Clinic

*Visit [TortoiseGroup.org](http://TortoiseGroup.org) for times, locations and details on each of these wonderful events.*

## HOPE TO SEE YOU AT OUR TG MONTHLY HAPPY HOUR

March 16  
April 20  
May 18  
June 15  
July 20  
August 17  
September 21

Visit [TortoiseGroup.org/events/](http://TortoiseGroup.org/events/) for locations.

## JOIN US AT THESE EXPOS

- March 18-20: Reno Pet Expo
- April 8-10: Clark County Fair in Logandale, NV
- April 9: Greenfest in Summerlin
- April 16-17: Springs Preserve Trial Demo
- April 24: Reno Earth Day
- May 7: Science & Tech Expo at Cashman Center
- May 21-22: LV Pet Expo



PO BOX 530478  
HENDERSON, NV 89053-0478  
RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

## I WANT TO SUPPORT TORTOISE GROUP PLEASE RENEW MY MEMBERSHIP!

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Email \_\_\_\_\_

**Thank you for all  
your support!**

Please return completed form to  
PO Box 530478  
Henderson, NV 89053-0478

\$25       \$40       \$70  
 \$100       \$250       \$750      Life  
Membership

**Additional Donation**      \$ \_\_\_\_\_

*Please make your check payable to Tortoise Group and return with this form.*

