



Lola's Story - The dangers of pools



Lola before her 10-hour immersion in the pool.

was there, it could have been hours. Even though I thought she was dead, I took her out, put her head down, expelled some water, and she made sounds.

"I gave her some air via

the nose, kept her warm (lamp and hot water bottle), and left her on an inclined plank (at about 35°) for about 9 hours, head down.



Five days into antibiotic treatment, Lola in the yard with a hot water bottle filled with warm water.

"She expelled mucus in great quantities (liquid first, then bubbly). I left her to sleep at 3 a.m., but in a horizontal position, all the time with the lamp and hot water bottle."

Luis followed the recommendations on the Tortoise Group site.

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An email to Tortoise Group from Luis Cadow, in Peru, highlights the dangers of tortoises falling in swimming pools. Luis' tortoise, Lola, fell in the pool, and in a frantic search, he turned to Tortoise Group's website for help.

Lola is a yellow-footed tortoise (*Chelonoidis denticulata*), also known as a South American tortoise, or forest tortoise.

Luis said "I found my earth turtle at 7 a.m. in the bottom of my pool. I can't say how long she



Students from Berkeley L Bunker Elementary School made a donation to Tortoise Group in May, after working on a project on tortoises. They raised funds by creating a tortoise activity booklet, which they sold around the school.



TORTOISE GROUP

A non-profit, 501 (c)(3) organization since 1982

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Helping our tortoises

Our trip to Reno, Carson City, Gardnerville and Minden, Nevada, at the end of May was a very fruitful and enjoyable one.

Lots of people were interested in adopting tortoises, and that's a good thing, because there are lots of pet tortoises in the Las Vegas area that need homes.

Of course, there are always going to be tortoises needing homes, but one of the overwhelming problems we face each year is backyard breeding, which adds to the number of tortoises we're trying to adopt to new custodians throughout the state.

We managed to get quite a bit of publicity, in collaboration with the US Fish and Wildlife Service, in articles in the newspapers and also television. Will it make a difference? Well, it might bring more people forward to adopt, but the most important thing is reducing the number of tortoises we *need* to adopt.

And it seems the message isn't getting across. I'm not sure why people feel the need to breed their animals. Sure, they may be cute, but it does nothing for the wild population, and they grow bigger, which means it's very difficult to care for them properly, and they generally outlive their humans, which means somewhere along the line, we get a call to help.

Unfortunately, while the Law states that there can be only one tortoise for new custodians, like tortoises, the legislation - at least so far - has no teeth. As Tortoise Group grows, I'd like to see us be able to take some kind of action when tortoises are in a situation that isn't healthy for them, whether it's too many in a small place, or being kept in poor conditions.

As tortoise custodians and lovers, we all need to work together to do what's right for our desert reptile friends!



Jim Cornall
Executive Director
Tortoise Group

MegaDiet RF Sellers

Please call sellers for appointment. All are 702-area code unless otherwise noted.

Check [map online](#) for seller locations

33% discount to TG members

Nellis & Owens	Georgi – 459-1274
Ann & Camino al Norte	Don – 374-2466
Durango & Grand Teton	Cathy – 339-5012
Craig & Cimarron	Annie – 306-5096
Decatur & Gowan	Toni – 277-6179
Smoke Ranch & Michael Way	Julie – 245-4671
215 & Far Hills	Kathy & Pauline – 804-0472
Rainbow & Charleston	Jamie – 232-6289
Charleston & Casino Center	
	Trilla at Ace Locksmiths – 528-2237
215 & W Tropicana	Athena – 682-0307
215 & S. Decatur	Carolyn – 534-7888 x824
	378-6514 cell
Russell & Pecos	Sherri – 339-9821
SW of I-15 & Blue Diamond	Michelle – 468-0162
Russell & Nellis	Cindy – 530-9052
Boulder Hwy & Equestrian	Carm – 451-3245
215 & 95 at Van Wagenen	Peggy – 281-3048
Boulder City	Carol – 293-6494
Pahrump	Sheri – (775) 727-5557
Kingman, AZ	Toni – (928) 757-8317

You can also shop at our [online store](#)

No computer? Call Susan at (702) 458-8382

Business Locations

(Member price not available—tax added to price)

<i>Creature Comforts Animal Hospital</i>	658-7339
Ann Rd and US95	
<i>Lone Mountain Animal Hospital</i>	645-3116
Rainbow & US95	
<i>Aloha Animal Hospital</i>	567-5222
S Torrey Pines & Warm Springs	
<i>Moon Sun Landscapes</i>	645-2032
Russell & Boulder Hwy	

New MegaDiet RF sellers

We are pleased that some volunteers came forward for a variety of tasks during our trip to northern Nevada. Here are our first to sell MegaDiet RF from their homes. Thank you!

If there is anyone that makes regular trips between Las Vegas and Reno/Carson City/Gardnerville who is able to deliver MegaDiet RF to our sellers, please let us know!

Tonya – S. Reno (775) 853-8218
Robin – Carson City (775) 220-0523
Tricia – Gardnerville (775) 450-2259

More northern Nevada workshops planned

Two more workshops are being planned for northern Nevada.

There will be a meeting Saturday, July 26 at the Humane Society, 2825 Longley Lane, in Reno from 3:30 to 6 p.m.

Sunday, July 27, the meeting and workshop will be held at the Cooperative Extension Hall, 1329 Waterloo Lane, in Gardnerville from 1 to 3 p.m.

There will be information for those interested in adopting tortoises, as well as stories from those who have recently become tortoise custodians, and more.

A full schedule for both workshops will be posted online when available.



The workshop in Gardnerville, NV, took place Sunday June 1.

Northern visit a success

Three members of Tortoise Group headed to northern Nevada at the end of May to put on two workshops, one in Reno on Saturday, May 31, and a second in Gardnerville, on Sunday, June 1.

The events were planned to assess interest in adopting pet desert tortoises in the area. The response was overwhelming.

Because of the large number of desert tortoises without homes in the Las Vegas area, Tortoise Group has partnered with the US Fish & Wildlife Service to offer adoptions in the Reno/Carson City area.

Upon arrival early on Thursday May 29, the group did a television interview on KOLO Channel 8, before heading off to do yard consultations, one of which was recorded by the local NPR station.

The highlight - other than the wonderful reception from residents - was the attendance at both of the two-hour workshops: 91 at the Saturday workshop in Reno and 56 at the Sunday event at Gardnerville!

As well as adoptions, the goal is to set up a northern Nevada 'chapter' of Tortoise Group, and many attendees expressed interest in helping, from selling MegaDiet RF to assisting with meetings and yard consultations. More visits will take place to adopt tortoises and help the new group become established.



More than 50 people attended the information session in Reno.

Tasty Plants, Nutrition and Diet

Notes from Dr Jennifer Parsons' talk at Tortoise Group on June 21, "New Studies on Tortoise Foods."

See the [entire meeting online](#) with Jennifer's talk starting at 37 minutes.

- Think about what the tortoise eats in its wild habitat: Mostly grasses, succulents, and small flowers.

MICROBES

Help tortoises digest food. We need to keep the microbes happy!

They want food, which is fiber.

Need a consistent environment—by feeding a constant diet with no sudden changes.

- No starches and sugars—these can cause colic (bloat), which is an overproduction of gas.
- **Diet-induced health issues:** Insufficient fiber and too much protein.
- Proper **brumation** is very important.
- Animals need to be outside to get **vitamin D** from sunlight.
- **Diet comparison:** MegaDiet RF, which is sold by Tortoise Group, has the recommended percentages of nutrients.
- Be careful of **toxic plants** ([see our list online](#)).
- Commercial vegetables have been bred to have a high sugar content.

BASICS OF A GOOD DIET

- Quality low-protein commercial pellet (MegaDiet RF).
- Grass hay (timothy or Bermuda hay – no legumes).
- Can offer some greens (low oxalate) very sparingly. Surprisingly, high in protein, low in fiber.
- Prickly pear sparingly.
- No commercial fruit.
- Native grasses like globe mallow

- **Training treats:** tiny pieces of jicama or carrot.

Feeding before brumation:

Slowly taper off MegaDiet RF. Outside, plants are dying off and tortoise will eat drier, more fibrous foods. Allow tortoise to browse on the drier plants. Don't confuse the tortoise with greens or starchy foods.



Spurge grows near sprinkler, sidewalk runoff, in lawns. Yummmm!



Check our [plant info sheet](#) online

New Feeding Dilemma:

To keep the microbes happy, I now want to feed my tortoise the same diet every day. I can let him browse and then give him a small amount of MegaDiet RF. However, I'm afraid that he'll become accustomed to my feeding him daily and not browse. And lazy! Can anyone think of a solution?

A tasty treat!



It's cantaloupe season! Your tortoise will thank you if you plant the seeds. When the sprouts appear in about one week, they will disappear in to no time!

Spread cantaloupe seeds, pulp and all, on prepared ground, (see picture above). Cover lightly with soil, pat a bit, and keep damp.



Cantaloupe seeds sprout in about 7-10 days. Notice that the first to sprout (circled) have disappeared!

Seasonal Care

Estivation

When the temperature is very hot, tortoises respond just like we do – they don't want to go outside! Your tortoise wants to stay as cool as possible in summer. To do that, he may just stay in his burrow during a hot spell of 7-10 days. If he were to leave the burrow to eat, for instance, he would heat up rather quickly, and the food intake would not be worth the effort it required to cool back down again. So the answer is to wait out the hot spell. Do not worry if your tortoise stays in the burrow for a week or more. Remember they can go for a long period without food or water.

Feeding a single food like broccoli

Tortoises have favorite foods, especially if that's all they have ever eaten. However, to achieve a healthy, balanced tortoise diet, let's follow Jennifer's advice on page 4: feed MegaDiet RF with browsing plants and occasional treats. A little grated broccoli (not chunks) is okay once in a while.



Broccolini (above) and cauliflower (below) see some browsing all season long.



Lola's Story

Continued from page 1

Luis took Lola to the vet, where the X-rays showed water in her lungs, and Lola was placed on 10 days of antibiotics to combat pneumonia. Since the event, Luis said that he has noticed she is munching grass, and joked that given Lola's survival, he should rename her Ariel after the Little Mermaid.

While tortoises are very resilient, and can be resuscitated after being in water, even if the situation may appear hopeless, it's clear that water

is one hazard to be aware of when having a pet desert tortoise.

Please take a look around your yard to see if there are any hazards that may prove to be a major issue for your desert tortoise as he or she explores his or her territory.

If you have an unfenced pool or accessible pond, be prepared. Read Tortoise Group's sheet on [how to handle an apparent drowning](#).



One of Luis's dogs, Jiro, has been sleeping with Lola during her recuperation.

Even if your tortoise looks dead, there's a good chance that it can be revived.



Hustle, who lives with Dar and Michael Delaney, enjoying the spring flowers.

Calendar of Events

July 19

"Creating the Perfect Habitat: Basics to Designer Ideas"

by Kathy Utiger, Tortoise Group Chairperson

New and creative burrow designs, plant tips, hazards watch for, lots of examples.

August 16

"Solar Development in Nevada"

by Jim Moore, The Nature Conservancy

September 20

"Desert Tortoise Recovery documentary"

Ellen Seldin, Southern Methodist University

MegaDiet RF in the regular bag and the 10# sack, and new Magic t-shirts are for sale at all meetings. Credit Cards are accepted.

All General Meetings run from 1-3 p.m.

Las Vegas Library (across from Cashman Center)

833 Las Vegas Boulevard North

Las Vegas, NV 89101

Any additional events will be announced by email

New Magic T-shirts in stock!



We have our new Magic T-shirts in stock and available **online in our store** and at meetings. The shirts are available in toddler, youth and adult sizes from 2T to 2XL. The price for shirts is \$16 for members, \$18 for non-members. The shirts are black and white indoors, but magically change color once exposed to sunlight! And there's plenty of that in Nevada. The image is based on a drawing by Tino Samson, who won a Tortoise Group design contest. Tino, who attends Eva M. Wolfe Elementary School, is seen here with his teacher, Cheryl Winnemore, both sporting their Tortoise Group t-shirts. The school sold over 50 t-shirts for Tortoise Group, and in return, \$1 from each shirt sold went to help with the school's tortoise habitat.

Tortoise Group Membership Form

Memberships and contributions may be tax deductible

1. Please Print the COMPLETE address

Name

Phone

Address

City

State

Zip Code

E-mail

2. Check One Newsletter Option

2014

☐ Send my newsletter by e-mail

☐ Send my newsletter in hard copy

3. Check amount you wish for your 1-year membership

() \$25 () \$35 () \$50 () \$75 () Life \$500

Special Contribution: _____

33% discount on MegaDiet and 10% on other Tortoise Group goodies to members and their immediate families

Make check payable to Tortoise Group. Mail with form to:
Tortoise Group, 1001 Adobe Flat, Henderson, NV 89011

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In Brief

Help Tortoises Find Homes!

Please help Tortoise Group find folks who would like to adopt tortoises. Tell your friends, co-workers, the people in line at the grocery store, and everyone else you meet what lovely pets tortoises make. Ask them to submit an [adoption application](#) on our website. We are limited to one tortoise for new custodians.

TG in the news

News 3 did a feature on backyard tortoise breeding early in June to highlight issues with adopting dozens of pet desert tortoises:
<http://bit.ly/1oy2twp>.

The Review-Journal also had a piece on the northern Nevada project:
<http://bit.ly/1mgukhM>

Sterilization clinic

Tortoise Group will be helping out with a tortoise sterilization clinic to be held in Las Vegas at the end of August. Veterinarians from the Mojave and Sonora regions have been invited to learn how to perform sterilizations of both male and female tortoises.

News from the Board

Jim Moore has resigned as a member of Tortoise Group's Board of Directors as he is relocating. He will continue his fine work with The Nature Conservancy, however. We would like to thank Jim for his long-time support of Tortoise Group and his many contributions. We wish him the very best.

We would also like to welcome, and thank, Angela LaFrance, CPA, who has agreed to join the Board of Directors.

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Tortoise Group
1001 Adobe Flat
Henderson, NV 89011

