



Welcome to Summer!

Tortoise Group is committed to being and staying green by publishing only electronic versions of the newsletter.

All newsletters, including past editions, can be found at TortoiseGroup.Org

You can also register to receive email updates on our website or by emailing help@tortoisegroup.org

Thank you for helping us keep our planet healthy!

[Kobbe Shaw](#), Executive Director

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](#) from our website or email us at info@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.

TG IN THE NEWS

Tortoise Group made headlines in May and June! Check out our Facebook page where you can see the broadcasts from the news coverage of Desert Tortoises, the Sterilization Clinic, and Carson's adoption!

May 13th – [Channel 3 \(KSNV, NBC\) featured story on Desert Tortoise: Scientists study the threatened species](#) by Denise Rosch. Scientists teach, "If you do come across a wild tortoise, leave it alone unless its life is in danger on a busy road. Move it gently, in the direction it was headed. You want to be really careful when you handle them because they can void their bladder. Sometimes wild tortoises only get to drink once a year." Also during the story, you'll get to meet Gracie, a 40-year-old tortoise adopted by Cindy Miller through Tortoise Group! As you recall, Gracie was our featured adoptive tortoise in our May TG Newsletter!

June 21st – [Channel 3 \(KSNV, NBC\) featured story on Population Explosion: Tortoise Group sponsors free sterilization clinic for pet tortoises](#) by Denise Rosch.

Tortoises D.B., Spartacus, Little Guy, Big Guy and Anthony get the first few seconds of their 15 minutes of fame as they are highlighted during this story about how the sterilization clinic works to prevent backyard breeding. With the catchy phrase, "Wild Stays Wild; Once a Pet, Always a Pet" this story is helping to educate the public on why TG has partnered with US Fish and Wildlife and other groups for this important annual event.



June 23rd – [Las Vegas Review Journal featured story Gov. Sandoval lives with a desert tortoise now](#) by Sandra Chereb. Carson, an 11 year old male tortoise moved into the Governor's Mansion and became the "mansion mascot." As Nevada's state reptile, Carson will now be representing all tortoises in his classy new burrow and habitat.



FREE Desert Tortoise Microchipping & Health Clinic

Presented by Tortoise Group, US Fish & Wildlife and
Nevada Department of Wildlife



September 10, 2016

10 am – 2 pm

Henderson Multigenerational Center
250 S Green Valley Parkway, Henderson

Please bring your tortoise in a high sided box or tote.

Please avoid feeding or soaking your tortoise prior to this event.

As with any pet, do not leave a tortoise in an
unattended car. They can die from overheating.

Free Registration – Free Health Check

Free Shell Tag – Free Care Information

Sterilization Information & Sign Up

*While registration is not required, it is recommended to help
us prepare for the number of tortoises that will be cared for
at the clinic. [Click here to register your tortoise for this event.](#)*

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



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
Lake Mead & Van Wagenen..Peggy (702)281-3048
Boulder City.....Carol (702)293-6494
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

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

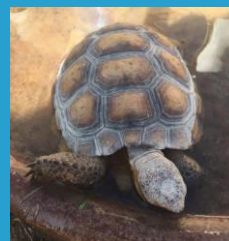
S Torrey Pines & Warm Springs.....(702)567-5222

Look Who's Ready to be ADOPTED!!!



Rhiannon is a female tortoise who is very laid back, a non-smoker, and early riser who enjoys skinny dipping in the sprinklers and long sips of cool water on a hot summer day. She prefers her vegetarian pellet diet served on a large saucer before noon. She's looking for a custodian who will spoil her with desert willow flowers and who doesn't mind if she helps with the gardening.

Beaver is an adorable little guy who loves long soaks in his water dish and chilling in his burrow. He is looking for a long term human custodian who can appreciate his talents – looking like a rock, intense staring contests, playing hide-and-go seek and ultimate competitor of the quiet game.

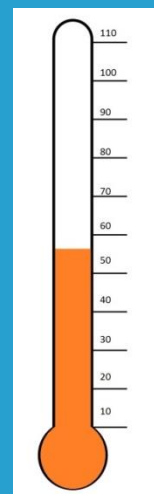


Patrick is a mature, physically fit male with well-defined plastron and impressive gular horn that seeks human companion to grow old with. Strict herbivarian who occasionally indulges on hibiscus, dandelions, and cacti. Requires adequate area for daily exercise and training for upcoming race with a hare. Fear of pools, coyotes, Gila monsters and accidentally being flipped over. Proudly wears the title as the Nevada state reptile.

Bootleg Betty was found in Bootleg Canyon near Boulder City nearly cut in half. Her shell was completely severed and only her spinal cord was intact. After two major surgeries to put her shell back together and almost two months of intensive care, the vets at Creature Comforts Animal Hospital have got Betty moving around again, albeit slowly. Betty will be looking for a new home as soon as she is released from vet care, and while she will need ongoing medical attention, we're very happy to have helped save her!



These beautiful tortoises are waiting at the temporary shelter to find their custodian. If you or someone you know is ready to provide a habitat for one of these or the many tortoises available for adoption, please contact Sarah, our TG Adoption Specialist, at sarah@tortoisegroup.org. She'll be happy to conduct a yard consultation and make recommendations on how your yard can be tortoise friendly. Her goal is to make sure at least 100 tortoises find their forever homes this summer.



Featured Tortoise of the Month

Buddy



People often ask if tortoises get along well with other household pets. Surprisingly they do! Buddy (now known as Rosebud after her last well-check revealed her gender!) lives with Lucy and Lily, her feline sisters. They get along terrific. Buddy often follows Lucy around and is fascinated by her scratching post. Buddy, Lucy and Lily can often be found lounging in Buddy's shady habitat. Buddy grazes on globe mallow and Mexican primrose and absolutely loves cantaloupe sprouts the best!

The siblings' custodian, Holly, learned how important regular health checks are for all her pets. At the sterilization clinic this year, Holly learned that Buddy had a respiratory infection. After a few weeks of antibiotics, she's as good as new!

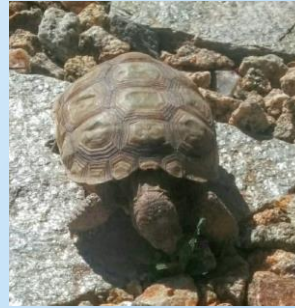
Holly has found that having only one pet tortoise makes it much more personable to both their human family members and their fuzzy ones!



Buddy saw the cats scratching at the post and wanted to give it a try!

Lost and Found

This season we've had a tremendous amount of postings on our website for lost tortoises and found tortoises. Please check tortoisegroup.org to help these tortoises find their way home.



Gorgeous George was lost in Sienna Hills in Southern Highlands.

Liz asked on our Facebook page about how to protect your tortoise from theft or loss.

An external shell tag with your phone number on it can let someone know that your tortoise needs help. [Lost Tortoise Prevention Kits](#) are available on our website and all tortoises who visit the microchip clinic in September will get one for free.

You can also learn how to mark your tortoise safely with our [Tortoise Info Care Sheets](#).

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 for a free consultation with a local estate planning attorney.

Thank you
Tortoise Group Partners



ASK THE EXPERTS

**Our Tortoise Advisory Council answers the questions you asked on our Facebook page!
(While most answers are here, others are found in throughout this newsletter.)**

Jayne asks: *I've noticed some of the hard scales have fallen off of my 52 year old tortoise's right leg. There does not appear to be any injury or trauma. Is this part of the normal aging process?*

TAC Answers: Scales coming off is not a sign of aging, but of trauma, and should be seen by a veterinarian. Signs of aging may include the size of the tortoise, scutes on the shell becoming sunken in, and/or thinning of the shell. Sometimes tortoises do shed skin and that's ok. It may look like flakes of skin. Don't pull it off. It will come off naturally.

Craig asks: *Do some tortoises prefer to live socially and others isolated?*

TAC Answers: Tortoises are by nature solitary animals. In the wild a "tortoise home range" may be up to 450 acres in space with just a little overlap from one range to another. Tortoises in the wild only encounter other tortoises while fighting or mating – both of which are stressful situations to tortoises who are unable to escape. Most tortoises prefer socializing with people and other domesticated pets rather than other tortoises.

Susan asks: *What plants can we plant that are easy to find in a local hardware store or nursery?*

TAC Answers: [The TG Info Sheet 21](#) offers a listing of different types of desert plants. Tortoises in the wild feed on a variety of plants, so try different plants at different times of the year. What they munch up at the beginning of the season, they may ignore later on. Springs Preserve offers an annual plant sale that includes vegetation native to the Mojave Desert. The Las Vegas State Tree Nursery also offers native plants, but they are limited in their supply. Either of these resources can help you find tasty plants for your tortoise!

Tracy asks: *Ouch! My desert tortoise bit my toe today! It broke the skin but there was no bleeding. Do I need to be concerned about any diseases that can be passed on to me?*

TAC Answers: Tortoise bites are not usually common as tortoises are not usually aggressive towards humans. However painted toenails can look like yummy flowers and when we feed our tortoises by hand, sometimes we might get an accidental nip! Teach children to hold flowers and leaves from the stem to avoid accidents. Even though they have no teeth, tortoises do have strong beaks. Tortoises do carry salmonella, although it is usually excreted through feces. Any time you touch your tortoise, be sure to wash your hands. After a bite by any animal, clean the wound and seek guidance from your human physician.

Ali asks: *What type of behavior can you expect to see when it's really hot?*

TAC Answers: Tortoises are cold blooded so they use the sun to warm up and shade to cool down to control their body temperatures. Even though they are designed for the desert, they are not built to survive extreme heat without shelter. Some tortoises may come out at dawn or dusk rather than mid-day and some may "estivate" which is similar to brumation, but in the summer months. During this time, you may not see your tortoise for a few days or up to two weeks. Check your yard to make sure your tortoise did not get stuck in the sun. If you see them foaming at the mouth, bring them inside to a cool (not freezing) area and run room temperature water on them to help them lower their body temperature. Call the vet for further instructions. Remember to keep a diary about your tortoise's typical behaviors so you'll only have to worry if they are acting differently than previous years.



Thank you to everyone who posted a tortoise question!

Visit us on Facebook and share your tortoise stories and photos!

WHY STERILIZE?

Mike Senn of US Fish & Wildlife answered our sterilization questions at the June General Meeting at Springs Preserve. One question on the minds of responsible tortoise custodians was: If my habitat is safe and secure, and I can ensure my tortoise is not getting out and another tortoise is not getting in, why should I sterilize my tortoise? The answer was: most tortoises will outlive their custodians since they can live in captivity for 80-100 years. While you may be a responsible tortoise owner, we cannot guarantee that of your tortoise's next custodian. What if the next custodian thinks your tortoise is lonely and wants a mate? That could easily lead to your tortoise being part of the backyard breeding epidemic rather than part of the solution. Sterilization is a simple strategy to stop this epidemic.



Look how cute!

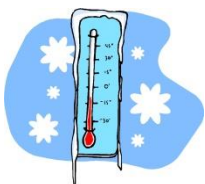
These hatchlings will be adorable, but overbreeding is a problem in Nevada. Please consider sterilizing your tortoise.

Kathi asks: Will sterilization help a female tortoise who lays infertile eggs every year? She seems to have trouble laying her eggs.

Sterilization takes away her organs and hormones to produce eggs so she will be less likely to search for a suitable habitat to lay her eggs. Sterilization also eliminates any risk of becoming egg bound in the future. A veterinarian can do an x-ray to see if she is egg bound or administer medication to help her lay eggs.

Kara asks: Wild tortoises are a threatened species...can't we just release our unwanted tortoises into the wild?

While that does seem like a logical solution, we don't release captive tortoises into the wild because they might be killed or they might infect other desert tortoise populations if they have the very contagious Upper Respiratory Tract Disease. We protect the desert tortoise because they were here before us, they are indicative of the health of the desert, they dig burrows that other species use and rely on, and we want to be able to pass them on to future generations. By releasing captive tortoises, we run the risk of harming wild desert populations for generations to come.



WHAT TO EXPECT EACH SEASON FROM YOUR DESERT TORTOISE

As you anxiously wait to see your tortoise emerge from brumation, check your yard for debris and hazards. Plant some new flowers or desert plants. Remember to weigh your tortoise when they emerge and mark down the date of emergence. When they are awake and active, offer water for a soak. Let them tell you when they are ready to eat. After you notice they have started browsing on their own, it's time to offer tortoise chow!

You're probably noticing that your tortoise comes out earlier in the morning or later in the evening. Sometimes, your tortoise may even sleep in. It takes a lot of energy to stay cool, so your tortoise may not be as active. It's time to weigh and measure your tortoise and remember to give them weekly soaks to stay hydrated. Check your gate barriers to make sure your tortoise is safe.

As the weather cools, your tortoise may not be as interested in food. Continue to soak your tortoise. Check nurseries for plant sales. This is a great time to get some new plants established – when your tortoise won't be eating them up! Make sure your burrow is snug and safe. A snug burrow will keep your tortoise insulated all winter long. Males may be active during this time, so make sure your yard is secure and safe.

Northern Nevada tortoises will be snuggled in their containers in garages while Southern Nevada tortoises should be in their outdoors habitat. Periodically check for debris that could be swept into the burrow opening from gusty winds. Don't block the burrow opening. If it's raining, tortoises may come out of brumation for a quick drink. The ideal winter temperature for brumation is 30-50 degrees Fahrenheit, so allow your tortoise to chill out during the winter season.

WHAT'S HAPPENING???

TG GENERAL MEETINGS

SOUTHERN NEVADA

July 16 - August 20

September 17

NORTHERN NEVADA

August 6

Please visit TortoiseGroup.org or our Facebook page for meeting locations and times.

HOPE TO SEE YOU AT OUR TG MONTHLY HAPPY HOUR

July 20; 5:30 – 7:30 pm



2801 N Tenaya Way, Las Vegas

August 17 - September 21

Visit TortoiseGroup.org/events/ for locations.

OTHER EVENTS

- Sept 10: Microchipping Clinic

Visit TortoiseGroup.org for times, locations and details on each of these wonderful events.

THANK YOU 2016 STERILIZATION CLINIC VOLUNTEERS

Adele Hawks – Alissa Swenson – Bob Furtek
Candace Christian – Cathy Erdmann – Charles Born – Cindee Park – Danyel Guay-Galloway
Dave Erdmann – David Deyner – David Kolar
Desiree Peneranda – Dianne McLain – Gary Graves – Gavin Huynh – Georgie Shalhoob
Gracie Rayner – Holly James – Jaden Rayner
Janina Little – Javier Valles – Jeff Ziegler
Jessica Park – John McLain – Kara Chaney
Karen Gray – Kat Lee – Ken Gray – Kim Bohle
Larry Maler – Lucy Davila – Margie Crocker
Marjorie Kirshner – Michael Steinberg
Papo Garcia – Pat Taylor – Peter Shalhoob
Rebecca Mancha – Robert Andrew
Roger Kolar – Sherri Graves
Sherry Hanneman – Sue Kolar – Sue Lyo
Tari Hawks – Teresa Ulring

*Together you donated
442 hours of time!*



Sarah and Tari caring for our tortoises

*I enjoy
volunteering with
Tortoise Group
because I learn
about my tortoise
and can educate
others who have
questions or
concerns.*

-Danyel Guay-Galloway

WEBSITE AND MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

We are in the process of updating our website and ensuring that your membership information is current. Using our website this past year has proven to be quite the challenge for many of you. Please accept our apologies and know that we are working diligently to correct this.

If you haven't logged on to our website before, it's going to ask you for your password. You may not have picked one yet. Simply click on the link "Lost your password?" and enter your email to reset your password. Didn't get an email after a few minutes? Send a quick email to help@tortoisegroup.org requesting a password reset (you can even put "password reset" in the subject line and just put your first and last name in the email and we'll know what to do!) We'll manually reset your password and send it to you in an email.

Please continue to let us know issues that come up when using the website and we'll be sure to address each and every one of them. This website is for you. Our goal is to have tortoise information easily available at your fingertips. Thank you for your patience.



I WANT TO SUPPORT TORTOISE GROUP PLEASE RENEW MY MEMBERSHIP!

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Address _____

Phone _____

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**Thank you for all
your support!**

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

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☐ \$40

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☐ \$100

☐ \$250

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