FOR MORE INFORMATION

Visit **www.azgfd.gov/turtle** to view photos of the different turtle species and to read more about the natural history of Arizona's turtles.

SPONSOR-A-TURTLE

You can support Arizona's turtle conservation by sponsoring a turtle for yourself, your organization, or in the name of a friend or loved one. The following suggested contribution levels provide support for varying types of research (examples in parentheses).

$25 Painted Turtle *(field supplies)*

$50 Mud Turtle Level *(small turtle trap)*

$100 Box Turtle Level *(large turtle trap)*

$200 Desert Tortoise Level *(radio transmitter)*

All sponsors will receive a Turtles Project sponsor kit, which includes a personalized sponsorship certificate and a photo of a turtle in the chosen sponsorship level. Contributors of $100 or more will receive an annual Turtles Project newsletter, and contributors of $200 or more will receive a detailed account of a specific tortoise in the department's desert tortoise radio-telemetry project for that year.

If you would like to make a tax-deductible donation, please complete the form on the back panel (or a copy) and mail it with a check, made payable to **Nongame Donations Fund,** to:

Turtles Project
Arizona Game and Fish Department
Nongame Branch
5000 W. Carefree Highway
Phoenix, AZ 85086

Yes, I would like to sponsor a turtle at the level checked below.

- ☐ Painted Turtle Level ($25)
- ☐ Mud Turtle Level ($50)
- ☐ Box Turtle Level ($100)
- ☐ Desert Tortoise Level ($200)
- ☐ Other_____

Please make checks payable to **Nongame Donations Fund,** and include **"Desert Tortoises"** in the memo.

Name _____

Address_____

_____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Arizona Game and Fish Department
5000 W. Carefree Highway
Phoenix, AZ 85086
(602) 942-3000

www.azgfd.gov

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The Arizona Game and Fish Department

TURTLES PROJECT

PAUL CONDON

Sponsor-a-Turtle PROGRAM

Heritage Fund

THE TURTLES PROJECT

Arizona's diverse natural environment is home to desert tortoises, mud turtles, painted turtles, and box turtles. The Turtles Project at the Arizona Game and Fish Department studies and monitors these species to ensure they are around for generations to come. Biologists accomplish this through various techniques using specialized equipment, including surveys using GPS (Global Positioning System), radio-telemetry, and health and disease monitoring.

DESERT TORTOISES

RANDY BABB

The Turtles Project uses radio-telemetry to study tortoises in the wild. Small radio transmitters, each with a unique frequency, are attached to individual tortoises so project biologists can locate the same individual repeatedly over time. Radio-telemetry does not harm the tortoise and allows biologists to find individual tortoises in concealed or cryptic shelters like boulder piles or rock crevices filled with packrat nest debris.

One of the department's current desert tortoise projects uses radio-telemetry to determine how the relatively small tortoise populations in Arizona persist, by studying tortoise movements and home ranges, and identifying specific habitat features necessary for juvenile tortoises. Obtaining this information will help prevent this long-lived Sonoran Desert species from becoming endangered in the future.

Help support Arizona's turtle conservation by sponsoring a turtle for yourself, your organization, or in the name of a friend or loved one. See back panel for details.

BOX TURTLES

IAN MURRAY

Box turtles are found in southeastern Arizona's desert grasslands. The Turtles Project performs surveys during the monsoon season to collect data on habitat use and population structure. The department also offers a program in which the public can participate in conservation efforts as "citizen scientists" by submitting information on box turtle sightings in southeastern Arizona. The "citizen science" program will help biologists determine whether box turtle populations are sustaining or declining.

PAINTED TURTLES

The only native population of painted turtles in Arizona can be found in Apache County. Although the department is not actively managing painted turtles now, they may study this species in the future to determine the origins of this isolated population.

TOM BRENNAN

MUD TURTLES

JIM RORABAUGH

Project biologists are also conserving Arizona's native aquatic mud turtles by removing nonnative aquatic species and studying the effects of these removals on mud turtle populations. Nonnative aquatic wildlife, including other turtle species, can have detrimental effects on mud turtles as they compete for food and habitat, prey on native turtles, or introduce exotic diseases or parasites.

Trapping nonnative aquatic turtles in the pond located at the front of the Phoenix Zoo is one management tool the department uses to help protect mud turtles. This effort slows the spread of nonnative species into the state's waterways, where they could potentially harm mud turtles or other native wildlife. Biologists trap turtles using large hoop traps specifically designed for aquatic turtles. Nonnative female turtles are brought to the Phoenix Herpetological Society where they can be adopted into approved homes. Male turtles are marked and returned to the pond to study ongoing population changes.