

Desert Tortoise (*Gopherus agassizi*)

California Desert tortoises are protected by law in California. The California Turtle and Tortoise Club handles the permitting of all tortoises in California. Desert tortoises thrive in warm climates but require shelter from the sun and the cold. Even in the desert they hibernate for a short period in the winter. They are susceptible to respiratory illnesses that are extremely contagious, so captive tortoises must never be returned to the desert. If the bottom of their shell is concave, the tortoise is a male. The shape allows the male to mount the female. If the bottom of the shell is flat, the tortoise is a female. They are on the move constantly which is why they are often lost by pet owners. Sadly many tortoises have a hole drilled in their shell allowing the pet owner to tether the tortoise so it cannot wander away. This often ends in tragic loss of limbs when the chain or rope wraps around the leg and goes unnoticed until the circulation is cut off.

Gobi

Desert Tortoises are amazingly persistent in trying to escape any enclosure where they are kept. Gobi got out of one area of a backyard and into another which housed the family dog. Gobi had several severe puncture wounds on his rear end and back legs. The family was unable to take care of him so they surrendered him to our vet who then placed him at Critter Creek. His wounds have healed and he continues his efforts to roam.

Mojave

Mojave was brought to us by a Fish and Wildlife warden from the southern Central Valley. He too was found roaming around town.