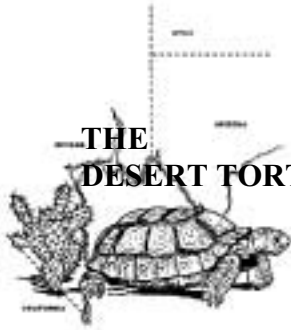


DESERT TORTOISE COUNCIL NEWSLETTER



WINTER 2003

OUR 28TH YEAR

Our Goal: To assure the continued survival of viable populations of the desert tortoise throughout its range.

2003 SYMPOSIUM

The 28th Annual Desert Tortoise Council Symposium will be held February 21 to 23, at Sam's Town. If you have not registered or made other arrangements, the time to do so is now.

Presentations will cover many aspects of tortoise ecology and management. Sessions include research and management on military installations, along with an update on federal agency activities to recover the listed Mojave population of the desert tortoise.

The Symposium begins Friday, February 21 with the Annual Meeting at 8:00 a.m. Sessions begin Friday morning and continue until Sunday afternoon. There will be a mixer and book signing Friday evening, continental breakfast Saturday morning, and the mixer and banquet Saturday evening. Don't miss the banquet, since it is always great fun. You can visit with old and new friends, network, enjoy a good speaker, and the raffle and auction is always entertaining. If you have any items for the raffle or auction, contact Bob Turner.

A block of rooms at Sam's Town is set aside for February 20 to 24. Rates are \$45 Sunday through Thursday, \$80 Friday and Saturday. When making reservations (800-634-6371), use the

following code: DESB03A (that is a zero). Refer to the Sam's Town web page for additional information:

<http://www.samstownlv.com/main.cfm>

The Registration form is on page 3. You must register to attend. The deadline for early registration is *January 15, 2003*.

Presentations made on Power Point must be on a compact disc and must be Power Point 2000-compatible. All Power Point presentations will be on computers provided specifically for that purpose. No personal laptops and no zip disks! Please check your CD's for viruses. Slide presentations (35 mm) are still acceptable, but overhead projections are not. These rules will help the presentations flow smoothly and keep the sessions on time. And there are no low ceilings this year!

Photography contest information is on page 2 of this newsletter. As a final note to attendees and vendors: Clark County requires that a sales tax of 7.25% be collected on all items sold. Questions should be directed to Local Host Chair Bob Turner.

PHOTO CONTEST

The Council sponsors the annual Photo Contest to honor and encourage our members to participate in educating the public through photography. Tracy Bailey is managing the 2003 Photo Contest.

FORMAT. For 2003, the format is mounted print and digital photographs in either black and white or color (no slides). All prints must be mounted with the following information placed on the back of the PRINT: common and scientific name of subject; location; date PRINT was taken; contestant's name, address, and phone number; and entry category. No names on the front, please, but titles and date are OK. This year, the Council encourages contest entrants to also submit electronic copies (in jpg format) of their entries so that they can be posted on the website before the Symposium.

AWARDS. Qualified winners will be awarded first, second, and third place ribbons in each of the eight categories. First Place awards will be \$50; second and third place winners will receive ribbons. The Best of Show will receive \$100.

CATEGORIES:

1. WILD DESERT TORTOISES
2. CAPTIVE (PET) DESERT TORTOISES
3. OTHER DESERT REPTILES
4. DESERT MAMMALS
5. OTHER DESERT WILDLIFE
6. WILD DESERT PLANTS
7. DESERT SCENICS
8. TORTOISE CONSERVATION. This category covers a range of subjects, but must depict activities or subject matter important to the perpetuation of the species. Examples are research, impacts (i.e., raven predation), improvements (i.e., fencing), and environmental education.

OTHER RULES. With the exception of Captive (Pet) Tortoises, all PRINTS must be taken of WILD (i.e., unrestrained and photographed in its natural habitat) subjects occurring within the geographic range of the desert tortoise. Each contestant may submit a maximum of two PRINTS per category. Photos must have been taken by the contestant.

SUBMISSION OF PRINTS. PRINTS must be available for viewing no later than 3:00 p.m. on Friday afternoon, February 21. You may either bring your prints and provide them to Tracy Bailey at the Symposium early on Friday or mail them to: 8287 Panorama Trail, Inyokern, CA 93527. PRINTS must arrive at this address by Wednesday, February 19, 2003. Photographers do not need to be present to win. To ensure that your entries are posted on the website before the Symposium, submit electronic copies (in jpg format) to the [DTC webmaster](#).

JUDGING. Prints will be judged at the Symposium by the attendees. Attendees will pick up ballots at the registration table and vote Friday and Saturday until 3:00 p.m. Winners will be announced at the Banquet on Saturday night.

PRINTS will not be returned, except upon advance request, and will become the property of the Desert Tortoise Council. The Council shall have the right to use these photographs in its publications and educational programs, as well as to assign such permission to others, with full credit given to the photographer.

REGISTRATION FORM

Desert Tortoise Council Annual Meeting and Symposium February 21-23, 2003

Return to
Desert Tortoise Council, c/o M. Coffeen
1111 Joy Ranch Road
Phoenix, AZ 85086

Please complete a SEPARATE form for each attendee.
Please print or type

Name: _____ **Organization:** _____
(First, Last) (Name to be used on ID badge)
Address: _____ **City:** _____ **State:** _____ **Zip:** _____
E-mail: _____ **Daytime Phone:** _____ **Fax:** _____

	SYMPOSIUM FEES	Enter Amount
Member Registration	\$85.00 (\$105.00 if postmarked after 1/15/2003)	_____
Student Member Registration	\$40.00 (verification required) (\$60.00 if postmarked after 1/15/2003)	_____
Non-member Registration	\$100.00 (\$120.00 if postmarked after 1/15/2003)	_____
Regular Membership Dues	\$15.00 (see dues schedule in newsletter)	_____
Banquet	\$30.00 Buffet	_____
Raffle Ticket(s)	@ \$1.00 each _____	=====
TOTAL ENCLOSED		_____

Make check payable to Desert Tortoise Council.
Only checks or fully executed purchase orders are accepted.

Monday Field Trip
I would like to attend one of several Monday, February 24, 2003, field trips.
Yes: _____ No: _____

**GALÁPAGOS TRIP
AUGUST 2 – 15, 2003**

If interested... call now!!!

Maggie Fusari, a long time DTC member, will lead an 11-day trip to the Galápagos Islands next summer (14 days total). For three years she has been arranging tours as a benefit for the Santa Cruz City Museum Association, which gets \$200 for each member who tours. This year she is adding DTC members and DTC will receive \$200 for each member who comes on the trip. As an added bonus, you also get a discount off the regular price of the tour.

The tour is limited to 15 passengers and SCMA members have already been notified. So hurry!!!

Tours will cost \$3,400 plus airfare (USA – Quito, Quito – Galápagos). If you are interested, please email fusari@ucsc.edu or call Maggie at (831) 425-6557 and she will send a flyer with details. You can also log onto the Galápagos Travel Web site to learn more about the tours.

<http://www.galapagostravel.com>

NEWSLETTER

The last issue of the Desert Tortoise Council newsletter was mailed electronically and also made available on the DTC web page as a pdf file. There did not appear to be any problems with the procedure.

These electronic options will conserve resources, and make sending the newsletter quicker, more efficient, and more economical. The Desert Tortoise Council membership is about 600 now; it costs hundreds of dollars to mail each newsletter. If you wish to change how you receive the newsletter or update your address, e-mail Doug Duncan at fdhcky@earthlink.net.

PROCEEDINGS

The Desert Tortoise Council will donate sets of proceedings to deserving libraries. Preference will be given to libraries within the range of the desert tortoise, universities, and especially institutions in Mexico. If you know of a library, university, or other institution that would benefit from a set of proceedings, please contact a board member.

We also plan on putting batches of proceedings on a CD as pdf files, and offering them for sale. All proceedings would likely fit on two CD's; with the first 10 years on one disk, and the remaining years on another CD. The price has not been determined yet. When we have the CDs ready, we will place a notice in the newsletter and on our web page.

Hard copies of the proceedings are still available for 1976 and 1978 to 2001. The 1980 annotated bibliography is also available. Check the web page for prices and ordering information. Proceedings will also be on sale at the symposium.

BOOKS

Once again, we will be offering discounted University of Arizona Press books for sale at the symposium. Prominently featured will be the new Sonoran desert tortoise book: The Sonoran Desert Tortoise: Natural History, Biology, and Conservation, edited by Tom Van Devender. Also new from the Press is Invasive Exotic Species in the Sonoran Region, edited by Barbara Tellman. If there is a particular book from the Press you would like to see offered at the symposium this year, contact the newsletter editor and we will try to attain it. The University of Arizona Press can be contacted at:

University of Arizona Press
355 S. Euclid Ave., Suite 103
Tucson AZ 85719
(520)621-7918 (7am-4pm MST)
FAX: 621-8899

<http://www.uapress.arizona.edu>

**The current Board of Directors of the
Desert Tortoise Council**

Senior Co-Chair	Tracy Bailey
Junior Co-Chair	Becky Jones
Junior Co-Chair Elect	Bob Turner
Treasurer	Mike Coffeen
Recording & Corresponding Secretary	Ed LaRue
Board Member	Kristin Berry
Board Member	Doug Duncan
Board Member	Tom Egan
Board Member	Marc Graff
Board Member	Kristen Murphy
Board Member	Glenn Stewart
Board Member	Pete Woodman
Newsletter Editor	Doug Duncan
Webmaster	Michael Connor

11th Annual Handling Workshop

The Desert Tortoise Council would like to extend its sincere thanks to the donors who supported the 11th Annual Desert Tortoise Council Techniques Workshop which was held in Ridgecrest, California in early November 2002. The sponsors, listed alphabetically, include:

CH2M Hill
Indian Wells Valley Water District
Romero Enterprises

We also thank the following individuals and organizations for their participation and support:

Mike Bailey
Tracy Bailey
BLM, Ridgecrest (Bob Parker)
CDF&G (Becky Jones)
CH2M Hill (Ray Romero)
Circle Mountain Biological (Ed LaRue)
CSC, Edwards Air Force Base (Mark
Bratton)
Enviro Plus Consulting (Gilbert
Goodlett)
Cynthia Furman

Patrice Gould
Erich Green
Bill Hasskamp
M. A. Hasskamp
Alice Karl & Associates (Alice Karl)
Chereka Keaton
Kiva Biological (Peter Woodman)
Nongame Branch Arizona Game & Fish
Dept. (Roy Averill-Murray)
Romero Enterprises (Sharon Romero)
SAIC (Kurt Rautenstrauch)
Liz Smith
URS Corp (Danny Rakestraw)
USGS-BRD (Kristin Berry)
USFWS (Ray Bransfield)
Rachel Woodard

We are grateful to the Indian Wells Valley Water District, who for the last nine years has provided the outdoor facilities for training attendees in field survey techniques, burrow construction, and tortoise egg handling.

COUNCIL PROJECTS

Finances: The current DTC net worth is about \$70,000; down significantly from the last few years as the Council puts money into desert tortoise conservation and education. The 2002 symposium netted about \$4,000.

The Council donated \$1,000 to the Turtle Conservation Fund. The Fund is a partnership initiative of Conservation International, the Center for Applied Biodiversity Science, IUCN/SSC Tortoise and Freshwater Turtle Specialist Group, and IUCN/SSC Turtle Survival Alliance. Our donation will go towards implementing the Global Action Plan for turtles and tortoises.

Chelonian Conservation and Biology: The special volume on tortoises is almost done. The Council expects to provide \$7,000 toward publication costs of this important publication. This volume should be for sale at the 2003 symposium.

Disease Workshop: The disease workshop was held November 14 to 17, 2002. Sponsors included California Department of Fish and Game, California Turtle and Tortoise Club, Desert Tortoise Council, Redlands University, Soda Springs, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and U.S. Geological Survey. The abstracts and recommendations will be compiled by workshop organizers and made available. We hope that the compilation will be available at the symposium. In addition, some of the more significant findings should be presented at the symposium. Some distressing news presented was that there appears to be a disease outbreak in tortoises at the Red Cliffs area in Utah.

Bio-regional BLM Plans: The BLM elves in Washington, DC sent the desert tortoise a couple of pieces of coal for Christmas - in the form of the official responses to the protests from conservation and desert tortoise groups over the Northern and Eastern Mojave (NEMO) and Northern and Eastern Colorado (NECO) plans. The lengthy responses can be downloaded from the California Turtle and Tortoise Club conservation page at:

<http://www.tortoise.org/conservation.html>

GAO Report: The General Accounting Office (GAO) also published its long awaited report on the costs of tortoise recovery. The also lengthy report can be downloaded (pdf file) at:

<http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d0323.pdf>

The report states that the listing of the Mojave population was justified. It also reports that the recovery plan was good for its time. The report goes on to state that \$100 million have been spent to recover the tortoise to no avail. This conclusion seems to have been reached because there is not a good population estimate for the Mojave population. As we all know, there have certainly been positive, on-the-ground accomplishments made in tortoise management and the knowledge on desert tortoise and desert ecology has improved greatly since the listing of the tortoise. But because the report lacks

specificity, fails to acknowledge on-the-ground actions, and also appears to ignore much of the recent scientific work on tortoises and their habitat, it presents invalid conclusions. We hope that an updated report that is more specific and considers all available information will give a clearer picture of Mojave desert tortoise recovery efforts.

CHARLES HERBERT LOWE, JR.
Noted Desert Ecologist, Herpetologist, and
Professor, 1920-2002

Dr. Charles H. Lowe, Professor Emeritus of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, who arrived at the University of Arizona in 1950 and retired in 1995, died September 13, 2002.

Dr. Lowe was an intense and colorful character who for many years was the leading naturalist and ecologist of the Southwest. In 1964 he published "The Vertebrates of Arizona," a landmark book that also included his detailed descriptions of all of Arizona's natural environments. For many years he taught a very popular and well-regarded course on the natural history of the Southwest at the University of Arizona. During the 1960's, he and his students resolved the most difficult problem in North American herpetology by showing that many whiptail lizard species were in fact of hybrid origin, and were all-female species, reproducing without males. Although a herpetologist at heart, his ecological interests were exceedingly broad. From 1969 to 1983, with National Park Service naturalist Scotty Steenbergh, he published a key series of books and papers on the natural history of the saguaro, and in 1980 he coauthored (with David E. Brown) the still-authoritative map of the Biotic Communities of the Southwest. In 1986 he published "The Venomous Reptiles of Arizona" with Cecil Schwalbe and Terry Johnson. His students have gone on to successful positions as major museum curators from coast to coast, as professors, and as key conservation professionals in Arizona.

Born in Los Angeles in 1920, he quickly

developed a love of the desert, and especially of reptiles and amphibians. After graduating from UCLA, he served in World War II, resuming study at UCLA in 1946. In 1950, with new Ph.D. in hand, he immediately departed for Arizona and the uncharted ecological realms of the Sonoran Desert region. During his graduate studies he also worked as an ecological consultant at Ground Zero in White Sands with two of his great lifetime collaborators, Kenneth Norris and Richard Zweifel. For most of his life, Lowe had a superb mastery of the scientific literature, and he and several students, including Wallace Heath, David Hinds, and Annette Halpern, performed a fascinating series of laboratory experiments on the ecology and physiology of diverse animals ranging from fish to lizards to roadrunners and jackrabbits. For example, their determination that the desert pupfish can tolerate temperatures up to 112 degrees F remains the known benchmark for fish. Although he was strong in the library and laboratory, it was his dedication to direct learning and exploration in the field that became his trademark.

Dr. Lowe flew with back country pilot Ike Russell to the unknown reaches of Sonora and the islands in the Sea of Cortez, and explored even more widely on the ground, inspiring generations of “desert rats.” He and his wife Arlene chaperoned ecologists, movie stars, and journalists through the natural and cultural history of the Sonoran Desert. He built one of the world’s largest and most representative collections of Southwestern amphibian and reptile specimens, discovered and described no less than 20 new species and subspecies, and published over 136 scientific articles and books (at last count). He had a widely-known ego to match, and in later years expressed regrets for having allowed it to roam all-too-freely. He suffered with the decline of the desert, and, in the past two decades, struggled with declining health and a house fire that destroyed invaluable materials and research in progress. In these decades he also enjoyed a much-mellowed autumn with his children and grandchildren, precious nurse Rosalie Peralta, his assistant

George Bradley, and his students, including work with Philip Rosen on ecological monitoring in the National Parks system, and with Daniel Beck and Brent Martin on Gila monsters and beaded lizards. While he could be aggressive and was not particularly tolerant, his drive to learn and achieve brought him great success and led to wide renown as a researcher. Matching this was his enjoyment of teaching, as well as the many stories about him that made him much larger than life. Yet larger still were his thoughtfulness, generosity, and his depth of feeling for nature and for those working with him.

Dr. Lowe was husband of the late Arlene Patten Lowe, and is survived by his loving son Charles A. (Cal) of Tucson, and daughter Catherine Anne and two grandchildren. Donations in his memory may be made to the Charles H. Lowe, Jr., Herpetology Research Fund at the Tucson Herpetological Society, P.O. Box 709, Tucson, AZ 85702-0709, or to the Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum.

SOURCE:

<http://marley.biosci.arizona.edu/collections/herp/charles%20herbert%20lowe.htm>

**FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
CONCLUDES FLAT-TAILED HORNED
LIZARD NOT THREATENED WITH
EXTINCTION**

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced January 3, 2003 it was withdrawing the 1993 proposed rule to list the flat-tailed horned lizard (*Phrynosoma mcallii*) as a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act in compliance with a court order.

The stated reason was because threats to the species are not as significant as earlier believed, and current available data do not indicate that the threats to the species and its habitat are likely to endanger the species in the foreseeable future throughout all or a significant portion of its range. The Conservation Agreement signed and partially implemented by seven Federal and State agencies was also a reason cited.

Desert Tortoise Council
c/o Doug Duncan
P.O. Box 331
Tucson, AZ 85701

Check one: MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION/RENEWAL CHANGE OF ADDRESS

DATE: _____ EMAIL ADDRESS: _____

NAME: _____ PHONE: _____

(Please Print)

(Include Area Code)

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP CODE: _____

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Regular (\$15.00 per year) | <input type="checkbox"/> Organization (\$55.00 per year) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Contributing (\$50.00 per year) | <input type="checkbox"/> Lifetime (\$300 or more) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Student (\$10.00 per year - Requires endorsement of student's advisor or Major Professor) | |

NEWSLETTER FORMAT:

Mailed paper copy Pdf file via e-mail E-mail notice for web page viewing

Make check or money order payable to the Desert Tortoise Council and send with this application
to: Desert Tortoise Council, P.O. Box 3141, Wrightwood, California 92397

The Desert Tortoise Council does not release its membership list