

DESERT TORTOISE - CASE STUDY

The Desert Tortoise is a large, plant-eating reptile that lives in the Mojave and Sonoran deserts in the states of California, Nevada, Arizona, and Utah. The Desert Tortoise has been the focus of a Recovery Program since the 1990s. In California, State laws to protect the tortoise have been in place since 1939.

Adult Desert Tortoises can weigh between 8 to 15 pounds. To have young, the Desert Tortoise must be about 15 years old. This means that when a new tortoise is born, we have to wait about 15 years before that tortoise can have a baby of its own. Waiting for young tortoises to grow up can make it difficult to see a fast recovery of the species. Sometimes managing tortoises can be hard because they spend much of their lives in burrows, or the homes they dig out underground, even during seasons when they are most active.

Questions

1. Describe two similarities between the Desert Tortoise and the California Condor.

2. Describe two differences between the Desert Tortoise and the California Condor.

3. Describe one thing that keeps Desert Tortoises from recovering quickly.

4. Does your answer to question 3 affect California Condors, too?

5. Explain one challenge that a Conservationist faces in locating endangered animals like the Desert Tortoise and the California Condor.
