



AZGFD Nongame Wildlife Conservation

Nongame Wildlife Newsletter

Good News for the Sonoran Desert Tortoise

In October, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced that the Sonoran desert tortoise does not warrant endangered species protection. The finding reflects a wealth of scientific data, and State and Federal agency collaboration to conserve the species. For more than 25 years, the Department has dedicated considerable effort towards monitoring and researching Sonoran desert tortoise populations statewide. The extensive data collected played a role in the Service's determination.

In addition to the Department's research, a recently-developed

conservation agreement among 16 federal and state partners that benefits the species statewide helped the Service reach a deci-



sion. The agreement, a Candidate Conservation Agreement (CCA), outlines effective conservation for the Sonoran desert tortoise and was submitted to the Service for consideration during their listing evaluation. CCA

partners include the Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Reclamation, National Park Service, Department of Defense, Customs and Border Protection, U.S. Forest Service, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Arizona Department of Transportation, and the Department. The agreement guides tortoise conservation actions across multiple agencies that have the best potential to directly conserve the species in Arizona. It promotes a coordinated conservation approach statewide, integrated monitoring and research efforts, shared expertise, supports ongoing conservation partnership formation.

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Partners in Action with Scientific Collecting Licenses: Bats in the Burn



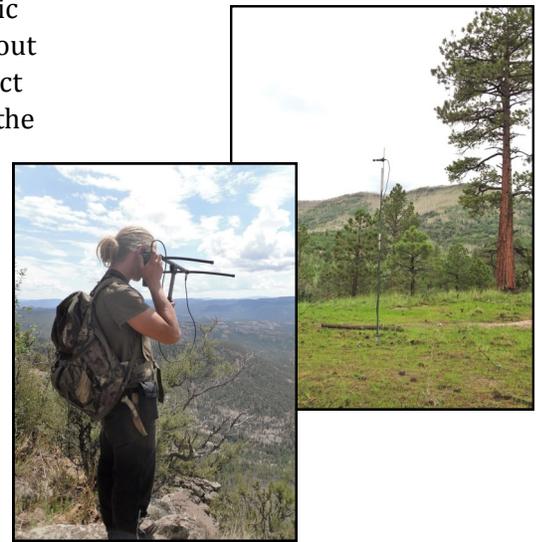
The southwest is experiencing hotter and much larger wildfires than in past decades. In Arizona, the Wallow fire burned over a half a million acres in 2011 and to date is the largest wildfire in Arizona history. Because bats serve such important roles in our ecosystem, Northern Arizona University graduate student, Erin Saunders, and Dr. Carol Chambers wanted to assess

how snag roosting bats are affected by large wildfires, such as the Wallow fire. This was done by capturing bats using mist nets, attaching radio transmitters to certain species of snag roosting bats, and tracking them back to their roost tree. With the transmitters attached, acoustic devices were also set up throughout the Wallow fire burn area to detect other bats. Together these allow the researches to compare forage patterns with the burn intensity.

From this research, they found that in the short term, wildfires do not appear to be severely impacting snag roosting bats and they will continue to roost in completely burned snags.

While it is good news that bats are using burned snags in the

short-term, the long-term effects are still unknown. Continued research and partnerships with agencies like Arizona Game and Fish and USDA Forest Service will help to better understand and manage habitat for these important species.



North American Bat Monitoring Program Update

Arizona is the lead state on a C-SWG Grant with CA, CO, ID, MT, TX, WA, UT and Bat Conservation International. The 8-state grant brings \$499,835 to the western states to begin implementation of a North American Bat Monitoring Program (NABat). NABat is a multi-agency, multi-national effort designed to address the need for standardized

monitoring and management of bat species across multiple taxa in North America. With this grant, Arizona and partner states became the first to conduct pilot studies to help inform and refine a protocol for use across the country. In 2015, Arizona surveyed 35 fixed point locations with Wildlife Acoustic bat detectors for 1 – 4 nights and conducted 14

mobile acoustic surveys using Ana-Bat SD2 detectors. Information gained in this project will contribute to refinement of national protocols, state data needs, and strengthen regional and local partnerships to help establish baseline datasets for future assessments of abundance and distribution of bats.



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Many Hands Building Topminnow and Pupfish Habitat



Recently, the Native Fish Program worked with local Audubon staff and Wells Fargo Green Team volunteers to improve shoreline habitat at the

Rio Salado Audubon Center's wetland pond. The pond is a Safe Harbor Agreement-enrolled site for topminnow and pupfish. Three areas along the shoreline, overgrown with cattails, were cleared to create open water habitat for the endangered fish. Ramps of

paver stones and sand were also installed to help keep those areas open as nursery habitat for the native fish. Within hours, pupfish were foraging along the open shoreline ramps and moving in to lay claim on the improved real estate as nesting sites. These ramps will also make it easier for us to monitor the site's fish population in the future.

Summer Story Update: There's no place like home!



Of the 22 Chiricahua leopard frogs tracked this summer, only two decided to move. The two that did venture away from home, moved over a kilometer and a half (roughly a mile). That's quite a feat for an animal only four inches long. The remaining frogs stayed within a few meters of their home

ponds. important information was gained about what these frogs do during the summer wet sea-

For more information about any of these articles, visit www.azgfd.gov

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To conserve Arizona's diverse wildlife resources and manage for safe, compatible outdoor recreation opportunities for current and future generations.

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