

OF THE FOUR SPECIES OF TORTOISES FOUND IN NORTH AMERICA, THE **TEXAS TORTOISE** IS THE ONLY ONE FOUND IN TEXAS.

THE **TEXAS TORTOISE** CAN BE FOUND THROUGHOUT SOUTHERN TEXAS AS WELL AS NORTHEASTERN MEXICO.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE TEXAS TORTOISE, CONTACT:

- TPWD: 800-792-1112
<http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/>
- Gulf Coast Turtle and Tortoise Society:
866-994-2887
<http://www.gctts.org/>

IF YOU FIND A TEXAS TORTOISE (OUT OF HABITAT), CONTACT:

- TPWD Law Enforcement
- Permitted rehabbers in your area
<http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/huntwild/wild/rehab/>

TEXAS TORTOISE

GOPHERUS BERLANDIERI



**UNFORTUNATELY
THERE ARE MANY THREATS
TO THE SURVIVAL OF THE
TEXAS TORTOISE:**

HABITAT LOSS | ILLEGAL COLLECTION
ROADSIDE MORTALITIES | PREDATION
EXOTIC PATHOGENS



Life's better outside.®



www.tpwd.state.tx.us 4200 Smith School Road, Austin, Texas 78744

In accordance with Texas State Depository Law, this publication is available at the Texas State Publications clearinghouse and/or Texas Depository Libraries.
© 2011 Texas Parks and Wildlife Department PWD BR W7000-0307A (9/11)

**EVERYTHING
YOU NEED TO KNOW
ABOUT THE STATE'S ONLY
NATIVE TORTOISE
& THE THREATS IT FACES**

THE TEXAS TORTOISE (*Gopherus berlandieri*) is the smallest of the North American tortoises, reaching a shell length of about 8½ inches (22cm). The Texas tortoise can be distinguished from other turtles found in Texas by its cylindrical and columnar hind legs and by the yellow-orange scutes (plates) on its carapace (upper shell).

COUNTIES WHERE TEXAS TORTOISE CAN BE FOUND



Aransas, Atascosa, Bee, Bexar, Brewster, Brooks, Calhoun, Cameron, De Witt, Dimmit, Duval, Edwards, Frio, Goliad, Gonzales, Guadalupe, Hidalgo, Jackson, Jim Hogg, Jim Wells, Karnes, Kenedy, Kinney, Kleberg, La Salle, Lavaca, Live Oak, Matagorda, Maverick, McMullen, Medina, Nueces, Refugio, San Patricio, Starr, Sutton, Terrell, Uvalde, Val Verde, Victoria, Webb, Willacy, Wilson, Zapata, Zavala

THE TEXAS TORTOISE IS LISTED AS A THREATENED SPECIES IN THE STATE OF TEXAS AND THEREFORE IS PROTECTED BY STATE LAW.

IT IS ILLEGAL TO COLLECT, POSSESS, OR HARM A TEXAS TORTOISE. PENALTIES CAN INCLUDE PAYING A FINE OF **\$273.50 PER TORTOISE.**



THE TEXAS TORTOISE IS THE SMALLEST OF THE NORTH AMERICAN TORTOISES

IT IS THOUGHT THAT THE TEXAS TORTOISE CAN LIVE AS LONG AS 60 YEARS, BUT IT DOES NOT REACH BREEDING AGE UNTIL 15 YEARS.

It has a low reproduction rate — females lay 1 to 2 clutches per year, with an average clutch size of just 3 eggs. The survival rate is low, so adult tortoises are crucial to the survival of the species.

AN INDIVIDUAL TEXAS TORTOISE HAS A VERY LIMITED HOME RANGE, SMALLER THAN A CITY BLOCK. IF A TORTOISE IS NOT RELEASED WITHIN ITS HOME RANGE, IT WILL MOST LIKELY DIE.

THE TEXAS TORTOISE IS ALSO HIGHLY SUSCEPTIBLE TO DISEASE. TOUCHING OR MOVING A TORTOISE IN THE WILD COULD CAUSE ITS DEATH.

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO IF YOU FIND A TEXAS TORTOISE?

IN THE WILD

LEAVE IT ALONE.

IN THE CITY

CONTACT TPWD OR A LOCAL REHAB OR ADOPTION CENTER.

ON THE ROAD

IT IS OKAY TO MOVE A TORTOISE ACROSS THE ROAD TO SAFETY BUT DO NOT MOVE IT LONG DISTANCES. DO NOT RISK INJURING YOURSELF OR THE TORTOISE.