

# Free Roaming Dog Working Group Update



- Maps requested by San Bernardino Co. Animal Control will be submitted to them
- Glenn Black has been trying to set up another meeting with the Animal Control officer for the desert for San Bernardino Co.
- They have had a new software program that allows them to enter data from calls and their responses to uncontrolled dogs in various areas of the desert.

- Their capabilities to determine with our help those areas they have received calls from then the info could be quite useful to us in our GIS mapping efforts to identify probable areas of greatest threat to tortoises.

- In March letters were sent to 133 veterinarians in CA, NV, AZ and UT
- Determine the “effects of dogs on desert tortoises in the desert-urban interface”
- Also asked the veterinarians for their general observations in reference to 6 questions dealing with tortoises they had treated for trauma caused by dogs.

- 52 follow up calls were made with response from 21 of the veterinarians and 2 emailed responses. Following are the responses:
- Twenty (87%) indicated they had treated desert tortoises for trauma caused by dogs
- Sixteen (70%) said they had also treated other species of chelonians exhibiting dog trauma

- Only 5 vets (22%) believed they had ever treated “wild” tortoises for trauma caused by dog bites. None attempted to estimate how many “wild” tortoises they had treated during the years of their practice.
- Estimates of the number of tortoises (captive and wild) that they treated each year for dog bites ranged from 1/yr – 50/yr.

- Types of trauma caused by dogs observed and treated to both desert tortoises (captive and wild) and other species of chelonians included chewed, cracked and missing scutes to areas of the plastron and carapace, head and limb injuries (partially or totally chewed-off ) and chewed-on gulars. All indicated they had successfully treated most injuries, however 18 of the 20 vets said they had to euthanize from some of the more severe injuries caused by dog bites.

- Fourteen of the vets indicated they had to perform either partial or complete amputation of limb
- There appeared to be no particular breed/ breeds of dogs that were more culpable than any others

- These interviews have confirmed that a domestic dog can cause varying degrees of trauma, sometimes resulting in death to desert tortoises and other chelonians. To what extent this is a significant threat to wild desert tortoises remains unclear.

# Next Steps

- We need help from San Bernardino Co. Animal Control in supply the information from there new tracking system
- When the information is completed, we will rewrite the preliminary draft
- Sent it out to the working group for review and comment

- Comments will be incorporated the draft
- A presentation will be made to the DMG, which we hope will be at the next meeting

This could be a tortoise



The end

