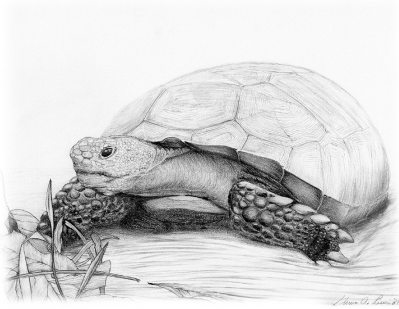
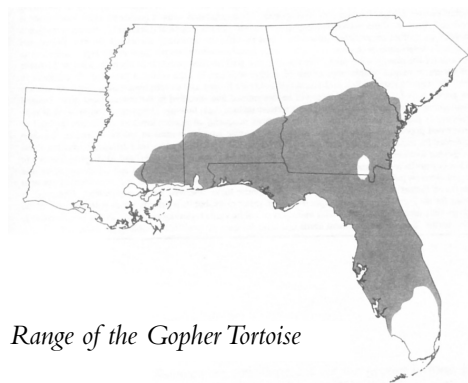


The Gopher Tortoise: A Species In Decline



The gopher tortoise is a species in decline and warrants additional protection rangewide on both state and federal levels. It is a species that lives up to sixty years, reaches sexual maturity at over ten years of age, produces relatively small numbers of offspring, and suffers from high levels of predation (nests and juveniles). Loss of habitat represents the greatest threat to the gopher tortoise. Severe losses in the western half of its range have resulted in the gopher tortoise being listed as Federally Threatened in Louisiana, Mississippi, and western Alabama. The recent discovery of an upper respiratory tract disease also threatens remaining populations. The gopher tortoise is an umbrella species, in that management and conservation efforts on its behalf also benefit the diverse ecosystem in which it lives.



Range of the Gopher Tortoise

Upland Ecosystems

Upland ecosystems are an important part of our natural southeastern heritage. Prior to settlement by Europeans, these ecosystems extended over vast areas of the southeastern coastal plain. However, today these ecologically valuable ecosystems have been severely reduced, fire suppressed, and fragmented. Protection of uplands through land acquisition and sound management plays an important role in the conservation of numerous listed species. In addition, upland ecosystems play a significant role in the hydrologic cycle, and their protection is pivotal to the success of water conservation efforts. Support of habitat conservation groups and of public and private land acquisition programs is of the utmost importance. Our responsibility to protect and preserve the biodiversity of these special southeastern ecosystems is quite evident.



Membership Application

Use this form or download from our website.

I wish to:

- join the Gopher Tortoise Council.
- renew my membership.
- receive additional information.

Name

Address

City

State

Zip Code

Home Phone

Work Phone

E-mail

Indicate your membership category:

- \$15 Student
- \$25 Regular
- \$40 Contributor
- \$50 Corporation or Society
- \$75 Sustaining
- \$300 Life

Please make checks payable to the Gopher Tortoise Council. The Gopher Tortoise Council is a nonprofit and tax-exempt organization (ID# 59-2010727) under IRS Code Section 501(c)(3). All contributions are tax deductible.

Gopher Tortoise Council
c/o Florida Museum of Natural History
University of Florida
P.O. Box 117800
Gainesville, FL 32611-7800

www.gophertortoisecouncil.org