

**Notice of Exemption**

**To:** Office of Planning and Research  
State Clearinghouse  
1400 Tenth Street, Room 113  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**From:** Department of Fish and Wildlife  
**Wildlife Conservation Board**  
P.O. Box 944209  
Sacramento, CA 99244-2090

**County Clerk (County of):** N/A

**Attention:** Amy Henderson

**Project Title:** Desert Tortoise Recovery Through Head-Starting

**Project Applicant:** Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB)

**Project Location – Specific:** APN(s)

Mojave National Preserve - Ivanpah Valley Critical Habitat Unit (Lat: 35.4000 and Long: -115.4120)

**Project Location – City:** near Baker, CA

**Project Location – County:** San Bernardino

**CEQA Region:** S. CA

**Description of Nature, Purpose, and Benefits of Project:**

The primary goals and objectives of the project are (1) to release head-started desert tortoises at sites on protected federal land identified for population augmentation (“implementation sites”) to increase tortoise populations in the short-term and increase the viability of populations for growth and continued recruitment of individuals over the long-term, and (2) to evaluate the effectiveness of these actions at implementation sites relative to a control site where ongoing research and additional releases of head-started tortoises can provide a strong baseline for comparison. It is expected that 25–50 tortoises will be released at appropriate sites annually for the duration of the project. Post release monitoring will allow researchers to quantify the expected outcomes of (1) survival and growth of head-started tortoises in the wild and (2) the suitability of habitat at implementation sites where population augmentation can have a significant, positive impact on recovery of the species and its habitat, and the resilience of populations to climate change. The expected benefits of the project are that at least one or more specific sites (control and implementation sites) on protected federal land will have improved population size and viability of desert tortoises with resulting increased resilience to climate change and other stressors. WCB Project ID 2024004

**Public Agency Approving Project:** Department of Fish and Wildlife, WCB

**Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out the Project:** Rebecca J. Fris, Deputy Executive Director, WCB

**Exempt Status: (Check One)**

- Ministerial (Sec. 15268):
- Declared Emergency [Sec. 15269 (a)]:
- Emergency Project [Sec. 15269 (b) and (c)]:
- Categorical Exemption. State Section number and type: 15306 Information Collection, 15301 Existing Facilities, and 15304 Minor Alterations to Land
- Statutory Exemptions, State code Number:
- Other:

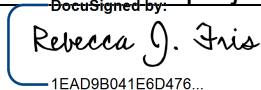
**Reasons why this project is exempt:**

The implementation of a recovery action consists of basic data collection and research which will not result in a serious or major disturbance to an environmental resource or topographical feature.

**Lead Agency Contact Person:** Rebecca J. Fris

**Area Code/Telephone Extension:** (916) 212-5637

**If filed by applicant:** 1. Attach certified document of exemption finding.  
2. Has a notice of exemption been filed by the public agency approving the project?  Yes, (by this notice)  No

**Signature:**    
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**Title:** Deputy Executive Director

**Date:** 6/3/2024

Signed by Lead Agency

Signed by Applicant

Authority cited: Sections 21083 and 21110, Public Resources Code.  
Reference: Section 21108, 21152, 21152.1, Public Resources Code

**SCH #:**

**Posted Date:**

**Date Received for Filing at OPR:**