CREATURE ATLAS

Animal Fact Sheet

Name: _____ Date: _____



Gopher Tortoise

Gopherus polyphemus

Gopherus polyphemus is the engineer of the longleaf pine sandhills of the southeastern United States, and its importance lies underground. Using shovel-like, flattened forelimbs it excavates burrows …

Quick facts

Classification: Reptile
Family: Testudinidae
Habitat: Longleaf pine forests, sandhills, scrub, coastal dunes, and dry upland habitats
Diet: Herbivore
Conservation status: Vulnerable
Lifespan: 40-60 years
Weight: 4-6 kg
Scientific name: Gopherus polyphemus

Did you know?

- Gopher tortoises are considered a keystone species because their burrows are critical to the survival of many other animals in their ecosystem.
- Gopher tortoise burrows have their own weather: the deep end stays near 20 C while the sand surface above bakes past 50 C. Sex is set by incubation t…

What I learned

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