

About Northwest Tortoise

Northwest Tortoise is a small 501(c)(3) registered nonprofit turtle/tortoise rescue operating out of Southeastern Washington state. Individually operated by me (Terese Meyer), a self-confessed non-tortoise expert, but with 25 years of day-to-day experience. I strive to educate and advocate for correct care and quality of life according to each species. A desire to help all tortoises escape general pet store misinformation and get every tortoise out of a glass box to place them in forever homes drives the rescue.

The desire to help all tortoises have a chance for a full, happy life without retail store misinformation, and get them out of a glass box to place them in a forever home drives the rescue.

The philosophy of Northwest Tortoise starts with education. HOURS are spent working one-on-one with people to encourage correct housing and diet. The goal is to have owners recommit to caring for their turtle/tortoise and provide the correct setup and diet. Unfortunately, my experience is the majority of owners decide it requires too much effort, expense, work or all three and decide to surrender the animal.

Where do they come from?

Rescues come from every scenario imaginable: owners who love them but cannot care for them, some are found where no turtle/tortoise should be, some come from law enforcement, some are just dumped and, with some luck, find their way to me.

Most turtles/tortoises arrive in very poor condition or injured. Dog bites, human abuse, poor care and a host of other ailments come through. Poor care is the hardest, costliest and longest condition to rehabilitate. Turtles and tortoises don't do anything quickly especially healing.

Whether they have physical ailments or mental health issues, all are given the required time and support. Some turtles/tortoises bounce back quickly (quick in turtle terms is six months) and some take years. Regardless they need to do this in a safe environment and this is what I provide, for as long as they need.

Serving the entire Northwest

Turtles/tortoises come from all over the Northwest, especially Seattle and Portland. It is not uncommon, however, to have one flown from across the country. I recently received one from Ohio. It's difficult being a one-woman rescue serving these major metropolitan areas. I do not charge a surrender fee, as some rescues do. Some owners may donate, but most do not.

Desire alone cannot make these tortoises' lives better. Unfortunately it all takes money. Money for pens, medications, vet visits, transportation, food, power, water, lights, heat emitters and a host of other expenses. Your donation is vital to keep Northwest Tortoise operating. Your donation covers every aspect of tortoise care. It takes 30 hours a week to operate, which I essentially donate my time (I receive no income from the rescue). Days, nights, weekends, traveling: it's all part of running the rescue (along with a career that demands 40 hours a week).

Why do they stay so long?

On average, tortoises come into the rescue and stay between 8-16 months. Some stay longer, some stay shorter, and some never leave. Some are in such poor condition the best outcome is a great quality of

life for their remaining days. They stay so long because, in my experience, to truly understand a turtle/tortoise's health status you need a long time to observe them. By the time they show symptoms the illness is severe. Additionally it takes a long time to get to know their personality. Knowing their personality allows me to make the best possible placement into a forever home.

What are the dollars and cents?

Housing (both indoor and outdoor), lights, heat emitters, substrate, medications, food, supplements, vet visits and whatever else they require run an average of \$1,000 per tortoise, per year. Currently Northwest Tortoise houses 30 rescues. Adoption fees represent less than 2% of these costs.

Your support is vital to continue providing an excellent quality of life with my goal of rehoming these amazing tortoises to their perfect forever homes.