



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Species Profile

Environmental Conservation Online System



Black-Footed ferret (*Mustela nigripes*)

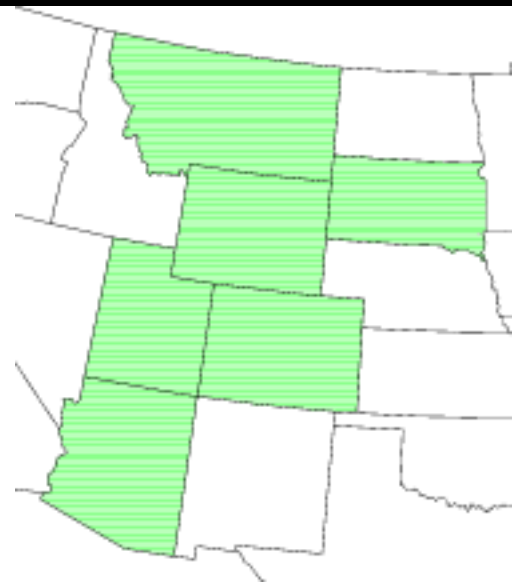
Kingdom: Animalia

Class: Mammalia

Order: Carnivora

Family: Mustelidae

Listing Status: **Endangered** and
Experimental Population, Non-Essential



Quick links: [Federal Register](#) [Recovery](#) [Critical Habitat](#) [Conservation Plans](#) [Petitions](#) [Life History](#) [Other Resources](#)

General Information

The black-footed ferret is 18 to 24 inches long, including a 5 to 6 inch tail. It weighs only one-and-a-half to two-and-a-half pounds, with males slightly larger than females. The black-footed ferret is well adapted to its prairie environment. Its color and markings blend so well with grassland soils and plants, that it is hard to detect until it moves. It is a slender, wiry animal with a black face mask, black feet, and a black-tipped tail. The rest of its short, sleek fur is a yellow-buff color, lighter on the belly and nearly white on the forehead, muzzle, and throat. It has short legs with large front paws and claws developed for digging. The ferret's large ears and eyes suggest it has acute hearing and sight, but smell is probably its most important sense for hunting prey underground in the dark.

Population detail

The FWS is currently monitoring the following populations of the Black-Footed ferret

- **Population location:** Entire, except where listed as an experimental population below

Listing status: Endangered

- **States/US Territories** in which this population is known to occur: Arizona , Colorado , Montana , South Dakota , Utah , Wyoming
- **Countries** in which the this population is known to occur: Mexico
- **For more information:** <http://www.fws.gov/mountain-prairie/species/mammals/blackfootedferret/>

- **Population location:** U.S.A. (specific portions of AZ, CO, MT, SD, UT, and WY, see 17.84 (g))

Listing status: Experimental Population, Non-Essential

- **States/US Territories** in which this population is known to occur: Arizona , Colorado , Montana , South Dakota , Utah , Wyoming
- **Countries** in which the this population is known to occur: Mexico

Current Listing Status Summary

Status	Date Listed	Lead Region	Where Listed
Endangered	03/11/1967	Mountain-Prairie Region (Region 6)	entire population, except where EXPN
Experimental Population, Non-Essential	08/21/1991	Mountain-Prairie Region (Region 6)	U.S.A. (specific portions of AZ, CO, MT, SD, UT, and WY)

» **Federal Register Documents****Most Recent Federal Register Documents (Showing 5 of 15 : [view all](#))**

Date	Citation Page	Title
05/16/2003	68 FR 26498 26510	Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Establishment of Nonessential Experimental Population Status and Reintroduction of Black-Footed Ferrets in South-Central South Dakota
09/11/2002	67 FR 57558 57567	Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Proposed Establishment of a Nonessential Experimental Population of Black-footed Ferrets in South-central South Dakota
10/13/2000	65 FR 60879 60889	Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Establishment of a Nonessential Experimental Population of Black-Footed Ferrets in North-Central South Dakota
07/18/2000	65 FR 440509 44518	Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Proposed Establishment of a Nonessential Experimental Population of Black-Footed Ferrets in North-Central South Dakota

10/01/1998	63 FR 52823 52841	ETWP; Establishment of a Nonessential Experimental Population of Black-footed Ferrets in Northwestern Colorado and Northeastern Utah; Final Rule
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Most Recent Special Rule Publications (Showing 5 of 10 : [view all](#))

Date	Citation Page	Title
05/16/2003	68 FR 26498 26510	Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Establishment of Nonessential Experimental Population Status and Reintroduction of Black-Footed Ferrets in South-Central South Dakota
09/11/2002	67 FR 57558 57567	Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Proposed Establishment of a Nonessential Experimental Population of Black-footed Ferrets in South-central South Dakota
10/13/2000	65 FR 60879 60889	Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Establishment of a Nonessential Experimental Population of Black-Footed Ferrets in North-Central South Dakota
10/01/1998	63 FR 52823 52841	ETWP; Establishment of a Nonessential Experimental Population of Black-footed Ferrets in Northwestern Colorado and Northeastern Utah; Final Rule
04/29/1997	62 FR 23202 23211	ETWP; Proposed Establishment of a Nonessential Population of Black-footed Ferrets in Northwestern Colorado and Northeastern Utah

» Recovery

[Recovery Plan Information Search](#)

- [Information Search FAQs](#)

Current Recovery Plan(s)

Date	Title	Plan Action Status	Plan Status
08/08/1988	Black-footed Ferret Recovery Plan	View Implementation Progress	Final Revision 1

Five Year Review

Date	Title
12/01/2008	Black-footed Ferret 5-Year Review

» Critical Habitat

No critical habitat rules have been published for the Black-Footed ferret.

» Conservation Plans

No conservation plans have been created for Black-Footed ferret

» Petitions

No petition findings have been published for the Black-Footed ferret.

» Life History

No Life History information has been entered into this system for this species.

» Other Resources

[NatureServe Explorer Species Reports](#) -- NatureServe Explorer is a source for authoritative conservation information on more than 50,000 plants, animals and ecological communities of the U. S and Canada. NatureServe Explorer provides in-depth information on rare and endangered species, but includes common plants and animals too. NatureServe Explorer is a product of NatureServe in collaboration with the Natural Heritage Network.

[ITIS Reports](#) -- ITIS (the Integrated Taxonomic Information System) is a source for authoritative taxonomic information on plants, animals, fungi, and microbes of North America and the world.

Last updated: October 13, 2009

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