

Chapter 1 : Black-footed ferret - Wikipedia

The black-footed ferret (Mustela nigripes), also known as the American polecat or prairie dog hunter, is a species of mustelid native to central North America.

Leave a reply Black footed ferret facts, pictures and information. Be sure to watch the amazing video of a black footed ferret and its favorite prey, a prairie dog. What happens is not quite what you might expect! American polecat, prairie dog hunter Scientific name: *Mustela nigripes* Animal Family: Mustelidae weasel family Where Found: Central North America Length: Declared extinct in the wild twice, but now making a comeback. The only ferret species native to North America. Introduction The black footed ferret is a small carnivorous meat-eating mammal native to North America. It is a member of the mustelid family, which also includes weasels, otters and minks. It is the only ferret native to North America. Although the black footed ferret is similar in name and appearance to the ferret commonly kept as a pet, it is a different species. The pet ferret is the domesticated form of the European polecat. The black footed ferret was first identified by American naturalists John Audubon and John Bachman in How to Identify the Black Footed Ferret The black footed ferret has a long, slim body, with a long neck and short legs. It has strong jaws and short, triangular ears. Its large front paws and sharp claws are adapted for digging. The black footed ferret has tan colored fur, with black markings on the feet and legs, the tip of the tail and across the eyes. The fur is lighter on the belly, and almost white on the throat and face. The black footed ferret is a very elusive animal. It is challenging to observe in the wild because it spends most of its time underground. Black Footed Ferret Facts: Lifespan In the wild, the average lifespan of a black footed ferret is 3 years. In captivity, it can live from 4 to 9 years. In the past, black footed ferrets inhabited a vast area that extended from Canada to Mexico. They were found wherever prairie dogs lived. Black Footed Ferret Habitat Black Footed ferrets live in shortgrass and mixed prairie habitat, in close association with prairie dog colonies. Black footed ferrets mostly live underground, usually in old prairie dog burrows. Here they sleep, hide from predators and raise their young. Black Footed Ferret Predators Predators of black-footed ferrets include birds such as golden eagles, great-horned owls, prairie falcons and ferruginous hawks; mammals such as coyotes, American badgers and bobcats; and reptiles such as the prairie rattlesnake. Prairie dog in its natural habitat. It is estimated that on average, an adult black footed ferret will consume 1 prairie dog every three days. Black footed ferrets hunt at night, entering the burrows of the sleeping prairie dogs and suffocating their prey with a bite to the throat. Black Footed Ferret Video In the video below, you can see a black footed ferret interacting with a prairie dog. A solitary animal, the black headed ferret only mixes with other black-footed ferrets in order to mate. Black footed ferrets mate in the spring, between March and April. The babies, known as kits, are born from May to June. Usually, kits are born per litter, and they are raised entirely by the mother. The kits are born blind and defenseless, and are dependent on their mother for several months. For the first two months of their lives, the kits remain hidden in an underground burrow. When they are 70 days old, the mother separates them into different burrows and starts teaching them how to hunt. By Fall, the kits are ready to leave their mother and live on their own. Is the Black Footed Ferret Endangered? The IUCN lists the black footed ferret as endangered. The species has been twice been thought to be extinct. Numbers of black footed ferrets declined sharply throughout the 19th century. This was due both to disease and to declining numbers of prairie dogs. Since prairie dog activity is damaging to agricultural fields, programs were put in place to control their population. This in turn greatly affected the ferrets. Conservation Efforts In the s, black footed ferrets were believed to be extinct, until a small colony was discovered in South Dakota in When researchers observed their numbers declining, they decided to capture some of them in order to start a captive breeding program. Unfortunately, the program was not successful and all of the ferrets eventually died. In , the black footed ferret was again declared extinct. In , however, another small population of black footed ferrets was discovered in a ranch in Meeteetse, Wyoming. Just like in the past, researchers noticed their numbers declining, and decided to capture some. Their aim was to breed the ferrets in captivity and reintroduce them to the wild. Twenty four ferrets were captured between and Although 6 of them died shortly afterwards, the breeding program was successful. Reintroduction efforts

began in , and continue to this day. According to a population count in , there are wild-born black footed ferrets. However, only four locations of the in which the ferrets were reintroduced are considered to be self-sustaining. These four locations are in South Dakota, Wyoming and Arizona. Threats The main threats for black footed ferret survival are: Ferrets are particularly susceptible both to sylvatic plague, a non-native disease passed on by fleas, and to canine distemper virus. Black footed ferrets are dependent on healthy prairie dog populations. If the prairie dog population declines, so too does the black footed ferret population. Conclusion We hope that you have enjoyed reading about the black footed ferret. You can find out more about endangered animals here: [Endangered Animals](#) Become an animal expert by visiting our main animals page: [The Ultimate Guide](#) Related pages:

Chapter 2 : Prairie Wildlife Research: Black-footed ferret

Black-footed ferret (Mustela nigripes) Since March 11, , the black-footed ferret (*Mustela nigripes*) has been listed as endangered across its entire range, with the exception of several reintroduced populations designated as experimental.

The black footed ferret *Mustela nigripes* , also called American polecat is a Mustelid species endemic to central North America. These ferrets were believed to be extinct until when they were rediscovered on September 26, The United States Fish and Wildlife Service launched a captive breeding program in which ferrets were introduced in eight western states and Mexico. Currently, there are around 1, individuals in Arizona, Wyoming, and South Dakota. These species are roughly the size of a mink. Black footed ferret is primarily nocturnal and solitary. They prey on prairie dogs which is their primary diet. It has short legs and stout and a long neck. Ferrets have sharp claws and toes. The adult male measures around to mm 20 to 21 inches in body-length, while the tail measuring at to mm 4. The males are typically larger than the females. The weight of black footed ferret measures around to 1, grams 1. They have completely black feet which gives rise to their names. They are buckskintan in color showing unique markings on their body. The color of the breast and stomach ranges from light tan to creamy. The males have larger homes ranges as compared to females. The mature females typically occupy the same territory each year. One of the females was observed to occupy a range of One of the resident males overlapped her territory with an area of The movements of ferrets largely rely on the prey density. They are known to travel up to 11 miles 18 km in search of prey mostly prairie dogs. The average lifespan of black footed ferrets is 12 years in captivity. They are nocturnal as they tend to sleep around 21 hours a day. They begin to prey at night. The period of gestation lasts for about 42 to 45 days after which the female litters 1 to 5 kits. The kits are usually born in the months of May and June. The ferret becomes mature in its first birthday. Kits show themselves out of the burrows 6 weeks after their birth. It is because of the declined population of prairie dogs that ferrets are suffering and are rapidly disappearing from most of the major habitats. Ferrets inhabiting Utah, Wyoming, Montana, and western Colorado, are found to consume white-tailed prairie dogs. They also supplement their diet by eating voles and this usually happens when dogs undergo hibernation. Black footed ferrets also take on northern grasshopper mice, house mice, deer mice, mountain cottontails, horned larks, western meadowlarks, upland sandpipers, thirteen-lined ground squirrels, and plains pocket gophers. Other prey items include meadow voles, ground squirrels, rabbits, pocket gophers, insects, birds, sagebrush voles, white-tailed jackrabbits, and mountain cottontails. They drink water through eating prey. One mature female ferret along with her kits requires to 1, black-tailed prairie dogs each year. Black Footed Ferret showing his face from the burrow Image Courtesy of newscientist. They rely on prairie dogs for food and shelter. Ferrets employ different habitats of these dogs as their own burrows. Prairie dogs had been known to occupy million acres of western rangelands in the early The habitat range of these dogs often overlapped with ferrets in the semiarid grasslands, Great Plains, and mountain basins of North America.

Chapter 3 : Black-footed ferrets released in Shirley Basin

The endangered black-footed ferret is the only ferret native to North America—the domestic ferret is a different species of European origin. Black-footed ferrets, a member of the weasel family, once numbered in the tens of thousands, but were driven to the brink of extinction by the s.

Mustela nigripes Other names: Pispiza itopta sapa, black-faced prairie dog, the American ferret, *Putorius nigripes* Identification: Black feet and legs, face mask and tail tip. Fur length approximately 0. Average female weight in autumn is 1. Average adult male weight in autumn is 2. Juvenile male weight in autumn averages 2 lbs. Black-footed ferrets are found surviving only on prairie dog colonies. The remaining portion is comprised of mice, voles, rabbits and small birds. Predation upon prairie dogs takes place below ground at night typically while prairie dogs are sleeping. Occasionally black-footed ferret use ambush hunting techniques near sunrise to capture a prairie dog as it emerges from the burrow. Breeding season begins in late March and continues through April. Territorial males will breed as many females as possible. Black-footed ferrets are induced ovulators. Gestation is 44 days and kits are born below ground completely altricial blind, naked, helpless. Average litter size is 3 range Female nurses the kits until they emerge above ground for the first time, usually in July. After copulation the male has no role in raising the young. Kits are adult size by autumn and ready to breed at 10 months of age. Black-footed ferrets are territorial and solitary with the exception of breeding season and litter rearing. Male home ranges average acres 53 hectares and generally overlap female home ranges that average 65 acres 26 hectares. Kits are adult sized by September females and November males and will disperse away from their mothers in September. Males typically disperse farther than females and also experience a higher mortality rate. Primary predators of black-footed ferrets include coyotes, badgers and great horned owls. Black-footed ferrets are mostly nocturnal but occasionally are seen in the daylight. At night they bound between prairie dog burrows. Active year-round they leave a distinctive track in the snow that biologists can track. Frequently carry ticks on the neck and head and fleas throughout the body but particularly the rump. Fleas are a vector of plague which is fatal to black-footed ferrets. Also susceptible to canine distemper. Prairie dog poisoning, land conversion to agriculture and plague reduced and fragmented prairie dog populations throughout the 20th Century. The first population ever studied was in Mellette County, South Dakota Nine individuals captured for captive breeding but no live young were produced. The last captive black-footed ferret from Mellette County died in and the wild population was also gone. Biologists feared the species was extinct. On September 26, a ranch dog near Meeteetse, Wyoming killed a black-footed ferret and brought it home to John and Lucille Hogg who took it into to taxidermist Larry LaFranchie who identified it as a black-footed ferret. A population was discovered and studied on white-tailed prairie dog colonies occupying private lands near Meeteetse. The population peaked at individuals in but declined to 58 in Sylvatic plague and canine distemper were decimating the population and eventually the decision was made to capture some animals. Six were captured but died of canine distemper. A total of 18 were removed 11 females, 7 males and formed the nucleus of a successful captive breeding program. By enough kits were produced in captivity that reintroductions back into the wild began and continue today. Future recovery of the species is completely dependent upon managing healthy prairie dog populations, requiring tools to mitigate plague and overcoming the negative social attitudes towards prairie dogs from the agricultural community.

Chapter 4 : Black-footed ferret videos, photos and facts - *Mustela nigripes* | Arkive

The black-footed ferret could also be called the black-eyed ferret because of the distinctive "stick-em up" mask that adorns its face. The tan ferrets also have black markings on their feet.

The length of its head and body is 15 to 20 inches 38 to 50 cm. Black-tipped, measuring between 4. Body hair is tan or buff with black tip hairs along the back part, but have a lighter color on the underside. Legs are very short. All the four legs and feet are black. Roundish face with a black face mask. Round dark eyes with black marks all around. Erect ears with blunt, roundish tips. Black square-shaped nose with whiskers. The males are slightly larger than the females. Black Footed Ferret Face Lifespan The lifespan of the black-footed vary greatly between living in the wild and living in captivity. They typically live for years or sometimes less in the wild, but can live up to years in captivity. Distribution These ferrets are the dwellers of the Northern Great Plains, around the mountain basins, and the semi-arid grasslands of west central North America extending from southern Canada to northern Mexico. Populations have been reintroduced to southeast Wyoming, northeast Montana and western South Dakota. Where do Black-footed Ferrets live These carnivores inhabit the short or middle prairie grasslands and are mostly common in the regions wherever its prey prairie dogs are located. Black Footed Ferret Habitat Population Around individuals of the species live in captivity at the breeding facilities. Another of these creatures live in the wild after they were released by the government. Behavior and Lifestyle Black-footed ferrets are primarily nocturnal and go out for hunting during night time. However, at times, they are also seen in the daylight. The black-footed populations need viable prairie dog towns for survival. They mainly hunt below the ground typically when the prairie dogs are sleeping. They primarily follow the ambush hunting techniques near to dawn when their prey emerges from their burrows. Not just do they depend upon the prairies for food, they typically live in the burrows made by the prairie dogs. It is in these underground burrows that they eat, sleep, raise their babies, etc. Generally, these creatures are territorial and lead a secluded life, except during the mating season or while bringing up the kits. The average territorial range of the male home is acres that usually overlap the female home with an average range of 65 acres. The ferrets are very vocal and would frequently whimper, chatter and hiss. They also feast upon other creatures like rabbits, small birds, voles, and mice. Mating, Reproduction and Life Cycle The breeding season of the black-footed ferrets begins from late January until early June with higher success rates between late March and April. A territorial male would mate with as many females it can. They mate in the burrow underground. After a gestation period of 44 days, the babies are born underground. The litter size of the black-foot is 2 to 6 average 3. The infants are born with fine white fur, and are completely blind and helpless and remain dependent on their mothers for about a couple of months. The young kits are very playful and would often wrestle with each other. The babies begin developing their body marks 3 weeks after birth. Their eyes open when they are about a month old. They continue staying with their mothers until the next fall, and are ready to breed when they attain the age of about ten months. Black Footed Ferret Baby.

Chapter 5 : Black-Footed Ferrets

Black-footed ferrets' color and markings blend well with grassland soils and plants, making them well adapted to their prairie environment. They are slender, wiry animals with a black facemask, black feet and a black-tipped tail.

Black-footed ferret at the Louisville Zoo The black-footed ferret has a long slender body with black outlines such as the feet, ears, parts of the face and its tail. The forehead is arched and broad, and the muzzle is short. It has few whiskers, and its ears are triangular, short, erect and broad at the base. The neck is long and the legs short and stout. The toes are armed with sharp, very slightly arched claws. The feet on both surfaces are covered in hair, even to the soles, thus concealing the claws. Its skull resembles that of polecats in its size, massiveness and the development of its ridges and depressions, though it is distinguished by the extreme degree of constriction behind the orbits where the width of the cranium is much less than that of the muzzle. Although similar in size to polecats, its attenuate body, long neck, very short legs, slim tail, large orbicular ears and close-set pelage is much closer in conformation to weasels and stoats. The top of the head and sometimes the neck is clouded by dark-tipped hairs. The face is crossed by a broad band of sooty black, which includes the eyes. The feet, lower parts of the legs, the tip of the tail and the preputial region are sooty-black. The area midway between the front and back legs is marked by a large patch of dark umber-brown, which fades into the buffy surrounding parts. A small spot occurs over each eye, with a narrow band behind the black mask. The sides of the head and the ears are dirty-white in color. Home ranges of males may sometimes include the home ranges of several females. A female that was tracked from December to March occupied Her territory was overlapped by a resident male that occupied Movement of black-footed ferrets between prairie dog colonies is influenced by factors including breeding activity, season, sex, intraspecific territoriality, prey density, and expansion of home ranges with declining population density. Nightly movement distance of black-footed ferrets averaged 0. Nightly activity areas of black-footed ferrets ranged from 1 to Males establish activity areas to maximize access to females, resulting in larger activity areas than those of females. In areas of high prey density, black-footed ferret movements were nonlinear in character, probably to avoid predators. Distance traveled between white-tailed prairie dog burrows from December to March averaged It is probably polygynous, based on data collected from home range sizes, skewed sex ratios, and sexual dimorphism. During copulation, the male grasps the female by the nape of the neck, with the copulatory tie lasting from 1. Litter size ranges from 1 to 5 kits. Kits first emerge above ground in July, at 6 weeks old. Dispersal distances may be short or long. Near Meeteetse, Wyoming, 9 juvenile males and 3 juvenile females dispersed 1 to 4 miles 1. In western Colorado, Utah, Wyoming, and Montana, black-footed ferrets historically associated with white-tailed prairie dogs and were forced to find alternative prey when white-tailed prairie dogs entered their four-month hibernation cycle. In South Dakota, black-footed ferrets associate with black-tailed prairie dogs. Because black-tailed prairie dogs do not hibernate, little seasonal change in black-footed ferret diet is necessary. Mouse remains could not be identified to species; however, deer mice, northern grasshopper mice, and house mice were captured in snap-trap surveys. Potential prey items included thirteen-lined ground squirrels, plains pocket gophers, mountain cottontails, upland sandpipers, horned larks, and western meadowlarks. Other food items included deer mice, sagebrush voles, meadow voles, mountain cottontails, and white-tailed jackrabbits. Water is obtained through consumption of prey. High densities of prairie dog burrows provide the greatest amount of cover for black-footed ferrets. Black-footed ferret litters near Meeteetse, Wyoming, were associated with mounded white-tailed prairie dog burrows, which are less common than non-mounded burrows. Mounded burrows contain multiple entrances and probably have a deep and extensive burrow system that protects kits. Males have higher rates of mortality than females because of longer dispersal distances when they are most vulnerable to predators. Habitat loss results from agriculture, livestock use, and other development. They are fatally susceptible to canine distemper virus, [7] [22] introduced by striped skunks, common raccoons, red foxes, coyotes, and American badgers. Black-footed ferrets are also susceptible to rabies, tularemia, and human influenza. Seismic activity collapses prairie dog burrows. Other problems include potential leakages and spills, increased roads and fences, increased vehicle

traffic and human presence, and an increased number of raptor perching sites on power poles. Traps set for coyotes, American mink, and other animals may harm black-footed ferrets. When we consider the very rapid manner in which every expedition that has crossed the Rocky Mountains, has been pushed forward, we cannot wonder that many species have been entirely overlooked. The habits of this species resemble, as far as we have learned, those of [the European polecat]. It feeds on birds, small reptiles and animals, eggs, and various insects, and is a bold and cunning foe to the rabbits, hares, grouse, and other game of our western regions. Louis in the late s. During the early years of predator control, black-footed ferret carcasses were likely discarded, as their fur was of low value. This likely continued after the passing of the Endangered Species Act of , for fear of reprisals. The large drop in black-footed ferret numbers began during the s through to the s, as prairie dog numbers declined because of control programs and the conversion of prairies to croplands. Sylvatic plague, a disease caused by *Yersinia pestis* introduced into North America, also contributed to the prairie dog die-off, though ferret numbers declined proportionately more than their prey, thus indicating other factors may have been responsible. Thereafter 7, acres of prairie dog colonies were treated with insecticide DeltaDust and 1, acres of black-footed ferret habitat were prophylactically dusted in Conata Basin in 1977. Nevertheless, plague was proven in ferrets in May 1978. Since then each year 12, acres of their Conata Basin habitat is dusted and about 50 ferrets are immunized with plague vaccine. Canine distemper devastated the Meeteetse ferret population in 1979. A live virus vaccine originally made for domestic ferrets killed large numbers of black-footed ferrets, thus indicating that the species is especially susceptible to distemper. This is one of the first examples of assisted reproduction contributing to conservation of an endangered species in nature. The Toronto Zoo has bred hundreds, most of which were released into the wild. In May 1980, the Canadian Species at Risk Act listed the black-footed ferret as being an extirpated species in Canada. The black-footed ferret was first listed as endangered in 1981 under the Endangered Species Preservation Act, and was relisted on January 4, 1983, under the Endangered Species Act. In 1984, the IUCN reclassified the species as "globally endangered", a substantial improvement since the assessment, when it was considered extinct in the wild, as the species was indeed only surviving in captivity. As of [update], about 1, ferrets are thought to live in the wild. In 1985, the U. Fish and Wildlife Service. Forest Service are exemplified in what the Rosebud Sioux tribe experienced: On the other hand, the tribe was also contracted for the U.

Chapter 6 : Black Footed Ferret Facts For Kids | Top 10 Interesting Facts about Black Footed Ferrets

Black-footed ferrets were first reintroduced on the Reservation in , but an outbreak of sylvatic plague swept through the release sites in and decimated populations of ferrets and prairie dogs, the ferret's main food item.

Rancher Bob Heward, who runs cattle on 26, acres of remote Wyoming rangeland, knelt in the sagebrush beside a prairie dog hole as he tipped open a small animal carrier with the ferret inside. She hesitated to come out as a half-dozen Game and Fish biologists looked on, cameras poised to capture an image of the endangered species. Dana Nelson, a nongame biologist with the Wyoming Game and Fish Department, tapped on the back of the plastic carrier with a wooden dowel, then slid a foot-long piece of black tubing into the hole – a taste of home for the ferret. Finally, the ferret slid her slender body from the cage to the tube and below ground. Heward, wearing a welding glove, dangled a chunk of raw prairie dog above the tube for a moment, preparing to drop it in the hole. The ferret re-emerged with a loud chatter and darted at his outstretched hand. A moment later, she poked her head out of the tube one more time to survey the crowd, whose figures cast long, late-afternoon shadows near the hole. The surrounding grasslands – a moment earlier full of movement from prairie dogs popping in and out of holes – lay still. An old predator was back. The Heward Ranch is part of a mix of private, state and federal land in the Shirley Basin, almost all of it open and undeveloped, save for the occasional wind turbines. Laramie Peak marked the skyline to the east and Elk Mountain to the west. Heward has been part of ferret recovery efforts in the area for the last 27 years, since wildlife officials first began releasing captive-bred ferrets there. Except when he joins in on releases or accompanies biologists on their annual surveys, he and his low-profile neighbors never cross paths. In total, a couple dozen captive-raised black footed ferrets were released by Game and Fish recently as part of continuing efforts to recover the endangered species. They were raised at the U. Most of the ferrets were kits, some as young as two months old, alongside a few adults. Each had to prove it was capable of surviving in the wild by killing a prairie dog prior to its release. Each was released at the mouth of an active prairie dog hole. The black-footed ferret, a member of the weasel family, was thought to be extinct in the s and was one of the first animals to be named under the Endangered Species Act. In , a ranch dog discovered a ferret population on a ranch near Meeteetse, sparking a recovery effort that continues today. Ferrets and prairie dogs are susceptible to sylvatic plague and canine distemper, which can decimate populations, so the remaining ferrets were taken into captivity until their numbers were stronger and the diseases could be better controlled. Biologists began breeding ferrets at a facility in Sybille Canyon before moving the operation to the Colorado facility in Shirley Basin was chosen as a release site for the new ferret population in part because of its large prairie dog population. The population has had its ups and downs because of plague outbreaks, but the most recent surveys turned up seven litters. Forest Service to drop its hopes of one day reintroducing ferrets on the federal land in the Powder River Basin. Attorney Karen Budd-Falen argued the area was no longer suitable for ferret reintroduction because of the presence of plague in the prairie dog population there. Landowners want the Forest Service to reduce prairie dog numbers so they can increase grazing. The conversation is an example of the ongoing conflict about the presence of prairie dogs on rangeland, as some ranchers claim they reduce the amount of forage available for cattle, leave behind dangerous holes and transmit diseases. Prairie dogs are also critical for supporting the rarest mammal in North America. Nelson said landowner and community support – such as they have in the Shirley Basin – is a necessary component for black-footed ferret reintroduction.

Chapter 7 : Black Footed Ferret Facts: Discover An Endangered American Mammal.

DESCRIPTION. The body of the Black-footed Ferret is a solid pale yellowish-tan color. Contrasting sharply, is its black legs and feet. The species' common and scientific name (negra = black, pes = foot) reflect this coloration.

Conservation Status Endangered **Appearance** The underside and the edges of the face of the black-footed ferret is covered with a brownish-white fur. Their back and the top of their head are coloured brown. The tip of the tail, their nose and their stout legs are black. Running across the face is a band of black. Their body is rotund and elongated. Their feet are covered with hair which conceals their long, sharp claws. The ears are triangular and sit on top of the head. Black footed ferrets measure between 38 and 41cm in body length. Their tail contributes another cm to their length. They weigh in at between 1 and 2 g oz. **Lifespan** Wild lifespan is generally only about 1 year but they are capable of making it to 5 years old. **Diet** The black footed ferret is a carnivore. In some areas the prairie dogs hibernate for four months. During this period the ferrets feed on voles and mice. Other prey items include thirteen-lined ground squirrels, plains pocket gophers, mountain cottontails, upland sandpipers, horned larks, western meadowlarks, white-tailed jackrabbits and deer mice. This species obtains their water from their prey. Their previous range was dictated by where prairie dogs lived. By though they were only found in Wyoming. These ferrets are found on shortgrass prairie, mixed grass prairie, desert grassland, shrub steppe, sagebrush steppe, mountain grassland and semi-arid grassland. Females maintain smaller home ranges than males. **Reproduction** Mating takes place in February and March. A male will come across a female who is in season and begin to sniff her genital region. They will then stay together for a few hours before mating begins. After days a litter of kits is born. An average litter is 3 kits. The mother will use a prairie dog burrow as a nest. This is lined with buffalo grass, prairie threeawn, sixweeks grass and cheatgrass. This species is also capable of delayed implantation. This means that the embryos do not begin development until the environmental conditions are right. The kits stay with their mother for a number of months. After 6 weeks they will make their first outing from the burrow. Following this the mother spreads them across individual burrows. After about 6 months they are the size of an adult and venture off on their own. Sexual maturity is achieved at 12 months old. **Behavior** Black footed ferrets are solitary except for when breeding. They are nocturnal and most of their hunting is done by sneaking into prairie dog burrows while they sleep. During winter they may not exit their burrow for up to 6 days at a time. Communication is through olfactory methods. They will use urination and defecation to convey messages. This is also used so they can re-trace their tracks during the night. They are also quite vocal hissing and chattering regularly as a sign of being scared or frightened. Predators of the black footed ferret include American badgers, bobcats, prairie dogs, hawks, prairie rattlesnakes, great horned owls, coyotes and golden eagles. Traps set for predators, oil and natural gas exploration along with seismic activity have all impacted on the black footed ferret. **Extinction, Re-discovery and Re-introduction** Until this species was classified as extinct in the wild. A dozen ferrets were found and these lasted till when it was once again declared extinct in the wild. During a captive breeding program began with 18 living individuals participating in this. It was managed by the U. In they began reintroduction. These reintroduced ferrets have begun breeding and by 1, ferrets were thought to remain in the wild.

Chapter 8 : Black-footed Ferret | North Dakota Game and Fish

As an official member of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) black-footed ferret recovery implementation team, Defenders of Wildlife works with governments, non-profits and private landowners to maintain and expand recovery sites for ferrets in their native western and central grassland and shrublands.

Chapter 9 : Black-footed Ferret Facts, Habitat, Diet, Life Cycle, Babies, Pictures

The black-footed ferret, a member of the weasel family, was thought to be extinct in the 19th century and was one of the first

animals to be named under the Endangered Species Act.