

Wyoming Wildlife Action Plan

From Vision to On-the-Ground Action

The Wyoming Wildlife Action Plan identifies 279 species of greatest conservation need in Wyoming, along with key habitats for these species. Of these species, 44 have been included because of specific known conservation needs. The remaining 235 have been included primarily due to a lack of key data necessary to assess their conservation status. The action plan identifies the threats and challenges to wildlife and proposes actions to conserve them and the places they live.

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Working with Partners to Bring Back Wildlife and Natural Areas **Restoring Black-footed Ferrets**

The black-footed ferret is the most endangered mammal in the country and a species of greatest conservation need in Wyoming's wildlife action plan. In the last three years, about 280 black-footed ferrets were released in two new locations within the Shirley Basin complex. Ferrets are estimated to live in approximately 370 square miles of total area. A master's research project has gathered unprecedented data on black-footed ferret populations and developed a new technique to estimate ferret abundance. This technique can easily be adapted to other reintroduction sites and will likely save many resources. Landowners have been extremely supportive of these efforts, new partnerships have been forged, and many others are eagerly awaiting black-footed ferrets on their properties. This collaborative conservation will restore black-footed ferrets and help avoid future conflicts over this endangered species.



Black-footed ferret/Mark Goke, Wyoming Game and Fish Department



Fish sampling/Curtis Gill

Gathering Information to Take Action **Conserving Native Fish in the Green River**

The Green River drainage of Wyoming is home to three fish species of greatest conservation need in the state wildlife action plan: bluehead sucker, flannelmouth sucker and roundtail chub. These fish are declining throughout their native range, due in part to water development and non-native fish. The Wyoming Game and Fish Department recently partnered with other states to conserve these fish over their entire range. Between 2003 and 2006, a crew collected fish and habitat information from 300 sites throughout the Green River Basin in Wyoming, a drainage area that exceeds 10,000 square miles. This work documented eight native fish,

and highlighted areas where bluehead sucker, flannelmouth sucker and roundtail chub still live. However, results also showed that non-native fishes are common and widespread throughout the drainage and threaten native fishes. This vital information will inform good management decisions to conserve bluehead sucker, flannelmouth sucker and roundtail chub for future generations.

Protecting Imperiled Land, Water, and Wildlife

Conserving Grassland Wildlife and Habitat

Grasslands of the Great Plains are one of the most imperiled ecosystems in the country. Grasslands in Wyoming are relatively healthy throughout much of their historical range, compared to more highly impacted region of the Great Plains. It is much more effective and less costly to conserve these areas now than to attempt to re-create them in the future. Several Landowner Incentive Program funded projects in Thunder Basin and Shirley Basin are conserving prairie

dogs, controlling invasive cheatgrass, and planting native prairie grasses. Other actions include employing a rest-rotation grazing system to improve grassland health and diversity. These proactive efforts conserve priority wildlife, including the swift fox, upland sandpiper, ferruginous hawk, mountain plover, white-tailed prairie dog, and burrowing owl before they become more rare and more costly to protect.

Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies

444 North Capitol St, NW, Suite 725
Washington, DC 20001
202.624.7890
www.teaming.com
www.wildlifeactionplans.org

Wyoming Game and Fish Department

5400 Bishop Boulevard
Cheyenne, WY 82006
<http://gf.state.wy.us/wildlife/compconvstrategy/>



Swift fox/Mark Goke, Wyoming Game and Fish Department

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