



2013 PROGRESS REPORT

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2013 facts and figures:

- 346 kits weaned.
- 265 animals released into the wild.
- 1 new release site in SE Colorado.
- 22,500 ac dusted for plague.
- 91,600 baits distributed during Phase II SPV field trials.

2013 SUMMARY

It was a year of continuing challenges intermixed with some remarkable successes.

Drought, plague, and politics were just a few reasons some reintroductions did not pan out in 2013. In addition, flooding in parts of the range, the government shut-down, and chronic maintenance issues at the National Black-footed Ferret Conservation Center (NBFFCC) hindered black-footed ferret recovery this year.

In spite of these challenges, the recovery program realized some noteworthy achievements in 2013:

- We updated the Recovery Plan for the first time in 25 years.
- Captive breeding success and survivorship in pre-conditioning reached near record levels.
- We completed a landmark Safe Harbor Agreement that helps private landowners to participate in recovery.
- We started a new reintroduction site in Colorado and revitalized an old one in Montana.
- We dusted over 22,000 acres for plague.

- We continued field trials for a promising new plague vaccine.

...and these are just a few of this year's events. Join us for a look back at a remarkable 2013.



A black-footed ferret in the wild. Photo Credit: Mike Lockhart, FWS

RECOVERY PLAN REVISED

In 2013 the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) completed the Revised Black-footed Ferret Recovery Plan.

This plan identifies recovery criteria and the actions necessary to achieve them in order for us to remove the ferret from the endangered species list.

Recovery will depend upon:

- (1) continued efforts of captive breeding facilities to provide suitable animals for release into the wild;
- (2) conservation of prairie dog habitat adequate to sustain ferrets in several populations distributed throughout their historical range; and
- (3) management of sylvatic plague.

When the black-footed ferret meets the recovery criteria, the Service will review the species' status and consider removal from the List.

Recovery plans do not regulate federal agencies or their partners. They do not obligate private landowners to implement the plan. Their cooperation is fully voluntary.



CAPTIVE BREEDING

In 2013 there were 167 females aged 1-4 years at 6 captive breeding facilities.

Kit productivity was higher in 2013 than in 2012 but survivorship was similar between years. In 2013, there were 94 litters produced (56% whelp rate): 408 kits born and 326 kits weaned (85%). In 2012, there were 78 litters produced (46% whelp rate): 329 kits born and 299 kits weaned (91%).

The 2013 Annual Black-footed Ferret Species Survival Plan (BFF SSP) meeting was held at the Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute (SCBI) in Front Royal, VA.

World Wildlife Fund's (WWF) Groupon effort provided \$11,570 to help pay for the

special canine distemper vaccines that ferrets require.

Laura Linn, from SCBI, agreed to become our new SSP Education Adviser.

A pharmacokinetic study was conducted at both NBFCC



2013 kits born at NBFCC.
Photo Credit: USFWS

and Cheyenne Mountain Zoo (CMZ) to help determine the optimal use of ponazuril in the treatment and prevention

of coccidiosis, which continues to cause fatalities in the black-footed ferret population.

We now know that ponazuril reaches high blood levels within a day of administration and remains high for about a week. We have been able to confidently decrease the dose and frequency of dosing based on this study.

Many of the BFF SSP Husbandry Manual chapters were revised and updated with the help of Joanne Luyster of the Louisville Zoo and staff at NBFCC. The work continues.

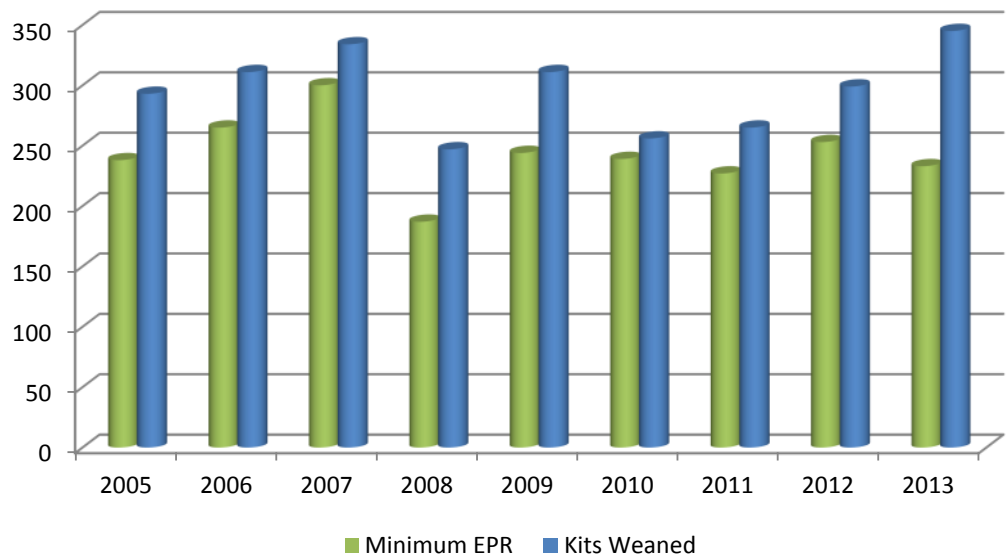
Reference: Black-footed Ferret Species Survival Plan® (SSP), Annual Update to BFF Recovery Implementation Team, Report by Della Garelle, SSP Chair, December 11-12, 2013, Tempe, AZ, 2pp.

“Productivity was higher than last year with similar kit survivorship.”

- Della Garelle, SSP Chair

Della Garelle, SSP Chair (Cheyenne Mountain Zoo, Colorado Springs, CO); Rachel Santymire, SSP Vice Chair (Lincoln Park Zoo, Chicago, IL); Paul Marinari, SSP Studbook Keeper (Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute, Front Royal, VA)

SSP-wide Expected Production Range (EPR) vs. Kits Weaned (2005-2013)



Source: USFWS

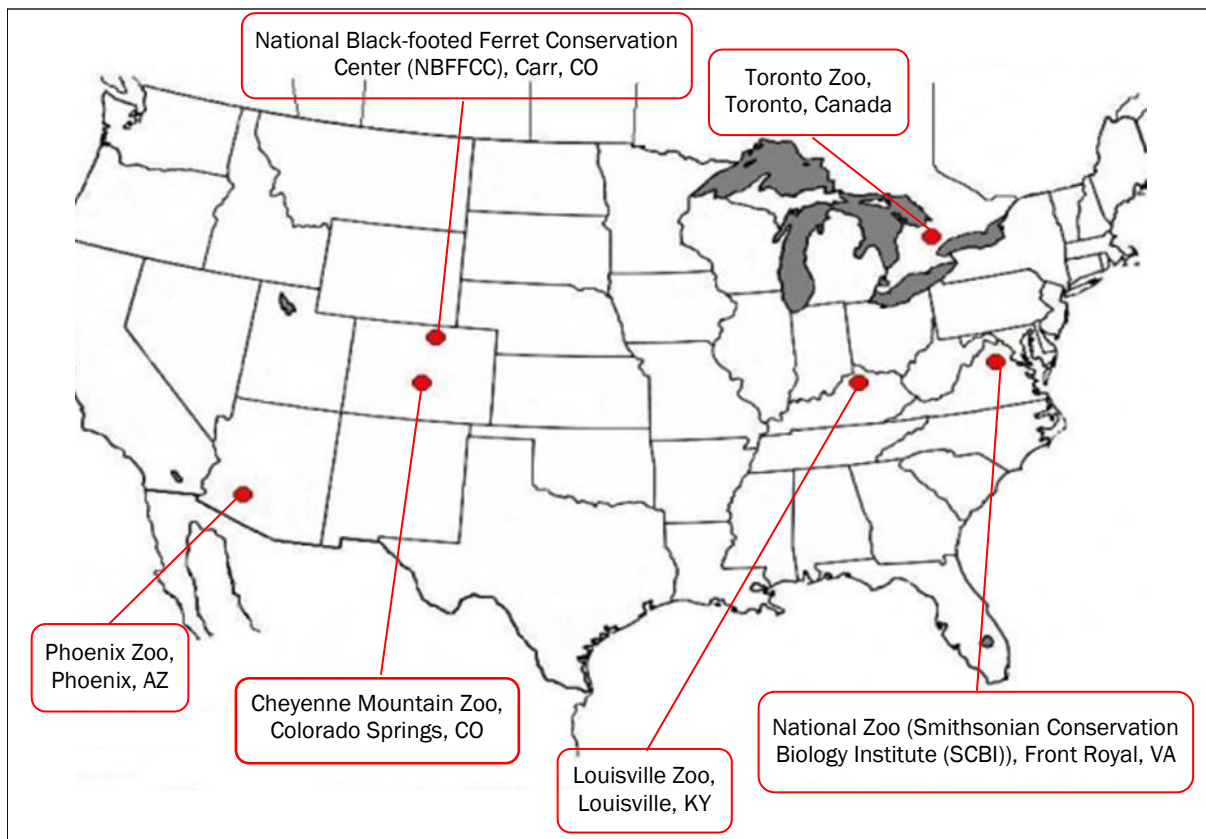
2013 PRODUCTIVITY AT BFF SSP FACILITIES

Age	# Females	# litters (% whelping)	# born	Mean born/litter	# kits born/female	# weaned (% weaned)	Mean weaned/litter	# weaned /female
1	48	22 (46)	90	4.1	1.9	75 (83)	3.4	1.6
2	63	46 (73)	219	4.8	3.5	195 (89)	4.2	3.1
3	48	24 (50)	92	3.8	1.9	73 (79)	3.0	1.5
4	8	2 (25)	7	3.5	0.9	3 (43)	1.5	1.5
Summary	167	94 (56)	408	4.3	2.4	346 (85)	3.7	2.1

Does not include AI females.

Source: Marinari and Bortner, September 2013.

BFF SSP CAPTIVE BREEDING FACILITIES



Black-footed ferret captive breeding facilities.



Kits at NBFFCC. Photo Credit: Kimberly Tamkun, USFWS.

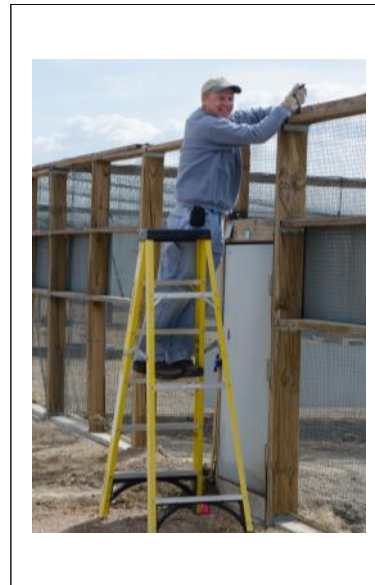
PRECONDITIONING PEN REHAB AT NBFCC

In 2013 NBFCC rehabilitated six outdoor preconditioning pens. These pens were selected because of their historically high ferret mortality rate. We used a new and improved design that would allow easier cleaning and ferret recovery. The total cost of the project was approximately \$18,000.

This year 256 kits were put into the preconditioning pens at NBFCC. Of those, 232 survived for release making 90.6 percent pen kit survivorship.

Forty-seven adults went into the pens of which 36 survived, including three that ended up over-wintering at NBFCC. This equates to 76.6 percent survivorship among adults.

In summary, 303 black-footed



John Hughes repairs preconditioning pens at NBFCC. Photo Credit: Kimberly Tamkun, USFWS

ferret adults and kits went into the pens in 2013. Of these, 268 survived (including the three retained) making total survivorship in the pens 88.4 percent and 265 individuals released into the wild.

By comparison, in 2012, 218 kits were placed in the preconditioning pens. There were 30 mortalities (86.2 percent survivorship) resulting in 188 kits released to the wild.

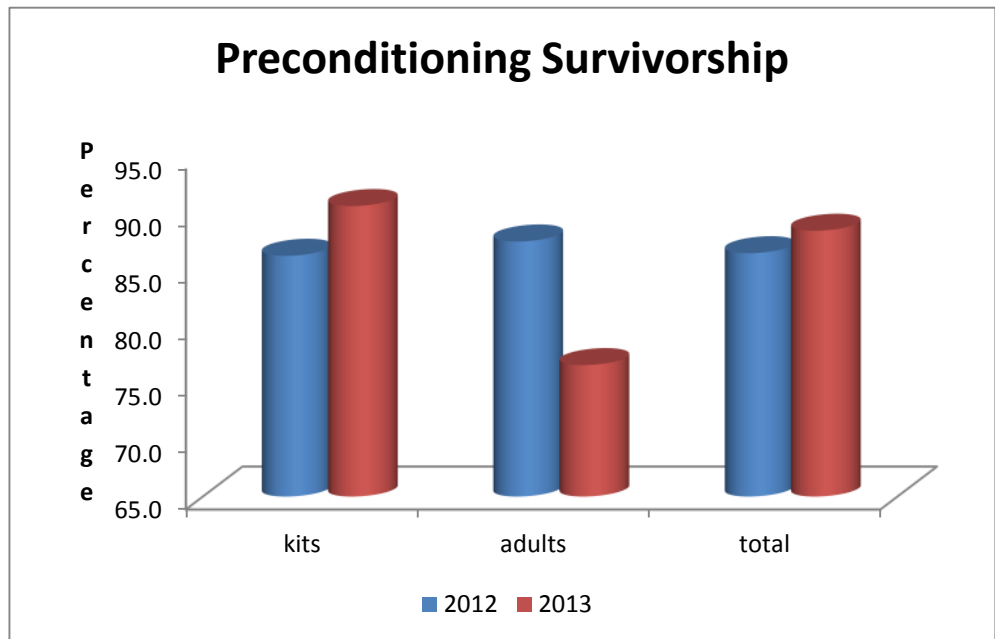
Forty-eight adults went into the pens in 2012. Six died and two failed to be trapped up again resulting in 87 percent survivorship and 40 adults released to the wild.

Total preconditioning pen survivorship in 2012 was 86.5 percent, approximately 2 percent less than in 2013.

In 2013, kit survivorship in preconditioning was 90.6%, up from 86.2% the previous year.



National Black-footed Ferret Conservation Center in Carr, CO. Photo Credit: Pete Gober, USFWS



Source: USFWS

SAFE HARBOR AGREEMENT FINALIZED

In 2013 the USFWS completed a Black-footed Ferret Programmatic Safe Harbor Agreement (SHA) in cooperation with State, Tribal, and private partners in 12 states after more than two years of collaborative effort.

This Agreement provides opportunities for non-federal landowners to volunteer their lands for reintroductions of this endangered species without affecting their land-use activities beyond mutually agreed-upon measures. It also extends these assurances to surrounding non-participating lands and other landowner interests.

Eligible lands are those with at least 1,500 acres occupied by black-tailed prairie

dogs or 3,000 acres occupied by white-tailed or Gunnison's prairie dogs.

The Agreement provides enrollees with assurances that no additional regulatory re-



A black-footed ferret in the wild.
Photo Credit: Kimberly Tamkun, USFWS

strictions will be imposed, or commitments required, for ferret conservation.

It provides regulatory protection to landowners for all ranching and grazing activi-

ties including, but not limited to, livestock movement and care, fence construction and maintenance, watering facility construction and maintenance and herbaceous weed control. It also provides for plague management carried out by partner agencies.

Under the Agreement, partners may implement prairie dog management to limit the expansion of prairie dogs onto undesirable areas.

Landowners can return their lands to baseline conditions at any time without penalty.

The Agreement precludes any regulatory burdens on non-participating neighbors.

The Service is actively seeking additional landowners to participate in the Agreement.

Relevant documents and other information can be found at: www.fws.gov/mountain-prairie/species/mammals/blackfootedferret/

"This is a win-win for everyone, including the ferret."

— Gary Walker,
private landowner

COLORADO LEGISLATION PASSED

This year the state of Colorado passed legislation allowing Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) to participate in black-footed ferret reintroductions on private lands enrolled in Safe Harbor Agreements.

Since 2000, the legislature has had to approve state involvement with federal reintroduction of endangered species on a case-by-case basis. This limited reintroductions in Colorado

because the state could not participate.

With the passage of this new legislation in 2013, CPW was able to participate more fully in recovery.

NEW REINTRODUCTION SITE WALKER RANCH, CO

Finalizing the Safe Harbor Agreement provided the basis for a new reintroduction site established on private land in Colorado.

As the first enrollees in this SHA in the country, Gary and Georgia Walker who ranch near Pueblo, Colorado, welcomed black-footed ferrets



Gary Walker releasing a ferret on his property. Photo Credit: Kimberly Tamkun, USFWS

onto their property in November 2013.

"The return of this species to eastern Colorado is a testament to the State's commitment to wildlife and the willingness of reasonable partners to accommodate both conservation and business interests," said Mr. Walker.

See the Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) video of the release at: <http://vimeo.com/82310645>

2013 ALLOCATION TO THE FIELD

We released a total of 265 individuals at various release sites in 2013—232 kits and 33 adults.

In addition to the new Walker Ranch site in Colorado a new area in Utah received their first

allocation of ferrets in 2013.

Also, thanks to the Fort Belknap Fish and Wildlife Department and other partners, ferrets were released once again

at Fort Belknap, MT, following several years of plague.

Reference: Black-footed Ferret Recovery and Implementation Team Conservation Subcommittee Report, Prepared by: Randall Griebel, Conservation Subcommittee (CS) Chair, December 11, 2013, Presented in Tempe, AZ, 4pp.

Site	# of kits (m.f)	# of adults (m.f)	Total (m.f)
Vermejo Park, NM (Gunnison's PD)	20 (12.8)	6 (1.5)	26 (13.13)
Ft. Belknap, MT	30 (17.13)	2 (2.0)	32 (19.13)
Aubrey Valley, AZ (3 releases)	50 (30.20)	8 (1.7)	58 (31.27)
Bohemian Bottom, UT (2 releases)	30 (17.13)	4 (0.4)	34 (17.17)
Walker Ranch, CO (2 releases)	50 (28.22)	5 (0.5)	55 (28.27)
UL Bend NWR, MT	20 (11.9)	1 (0.1)	21 (11.10)
Wind Cave, SD	10 (6.4)	1 (0.1)	11 (6.5)
Cheyenne River, SD	22 (15.7)	6 (0.6)	28 (15.13)
TOTALS	232 (136.96)	33 (4.29)	265 (140.125)

Source: USFWS

Randy Griebel, Conservation Subcommittee Chair (US Forest Service, Wall, SD)

"In 2013, a total of 22,546 acres were dusted for plague."

*- Randy Griebel,
Conservation
Subcommittee Chair*

PLAGUE MANAGEMENT—DUSTING

With the significant impact plague is having on the ferret population as a whole, plague mitigation through dusting prairie dog burrows and vaccinating ferrets is conducted at various current and potential reintroduction sites throughout the range of the ferret. In 2013, a total of 22,546 acres were dusted.



Dusting at NBFCC.
Photo Credit: USFWS

The Bayer Science Corporation dust donation program continued in 2013. Bayer donates one case of dust for every two cases purchased up to a total of 250 cases per year. In 2013, Bayer contributed 180 cases of free dust worth an estimated \$39,600 to ferret conservation.

Reference: Black-footed Ferret Recovery and Implementation Team Conservation Subcommittee Report, Prepared by: Randall Griebel, CS Chair, December 11, 2013, Presented in Tempe, AZ, 4pp.

Conata Basin	SD	11,656 ac
Badlands National Park	SD	1,970 ac
Wind Cave National Park	SD	380 ac
Fort Belknap	MT	700 ac
Thunder Basin National Grassland	WY	3,000 ac
Lower Brule	SD	400 ac
Kiowa-Rita Blanca National Grassland	TX	600 ac
Grasslands National Park	Canada	1,165 ac
Northern Cheyenne	MT	250 ac
Vermejo Ranch	NM	2,200 ac
Bad River Ranch	SD	225 ac
TOTAL		22,546 ac

Source: R. Griebel, 2013.

Thank you,
Bayer and WWF!



SYLVATIC PLAGUE VACCINE

The U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) National Wildlife Health Center (NWHC), led by Dr. Tonie Roche and key partners, continues to spearhead an effort to assess the efficacy of sylvatic plague vaccine (SPV) in prairie dogs.

In 2013 Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) and USGS completed Phase I bio-safety trials and confirmed that SPV is safe for both target and non-target animals.

In addition, USGS initiated Phase II, a multi-state, multi-agency field trial to be conducted at 29 study sites (which consist of a matched treatment and control site) over the course of three

years (2013-2016) to determine the efficacy of SPV in preventing plague in the field.

Specific objectives of Phase II trials are to:

- 1) measure vaccine/bait uptake in prairie dogs under field conditions;
- 2) assess and compare prairie dog (and possibly ferret) survival rates at sites with and without vaccine/bait application; and
- 3) monitor the occurrence of plague at sites with and without vaccine application.

Testing took place at sites in 8 States (AZ, CO, MT, NM, SD, TX, UT and WY) and within the range of all 4 species of prairie dogs in the United States

(black-tailed (BTPD), Gunnison's (GPD), Utah (UTPD) and white-tailed (WTPD) prairie dogs).

Results of the first year of field trials are currently being analyzed.

Reference: Sylvatic Plague Vaccine Subcommittee (SPV), Annual Update to BFF Recovery Implementation Team, Report by Terry Johnson, December 11-12, 2013, Tempe, AZ.



Prairie dog eating bait with biomarker. Photo Credit: Tonie Roche, NWHC

In 2013, USGS initiated Phase II, a multi-state, multi-agency field trial to be conducted at 29 sites.

Dave Bergman (APHIS-WS) and Bridget Fahey (FWS), Co-chairs Sylvatic Plague Vaccine Subcommittee; Terry Johnson, SPV Project Coordinator

SPV PHASE II FIELD SITES, BAIT DISTRIBUTION, AND POST-BAIT SAMPLING FOR 2013

Agency	Location	Species	# paired sites	Total Acreage	Total # baits distributed	# pdogs caught and sampled*
Utah Div. Wildl.	Coyote Basin, UT	WTPD	2	273	11,000	129
WY Game and Fish	Meeteetse, WY	WTPD	2	160	6,400	291
Utah Div. Wildl.	Iron County, UT	UPD	3	72	3,129	281
USGS/FWS	Awapa Plateau, UT	UPD	4	135	3,966	412
AZ Game and Fish	Espee Ranch, AZ	GPD	1	100	4,000	109
CO Parks & Wildl	Gunnison, CO	GPD	3	295	11,800	420
Tribal	Lower Brule, SD	BTPD	1	40	1,600	175
Forest Service	Buffalo Gap NG, SD	BTPD	2	197	7,880	266
USGS/FWS	CMR, MT	BTPD	5	204	8,406	564
CO Parks & Wildl	Larimer, CO	BTPD	3	655	26,200	260
Tx Parks and Wildl	Rita Blanca NG, TX	BTPD	2	140	5,600	185
Natl. Park Service	Wind Cave NP, SD	BTPD	1	40	1,600	125
			29	2,311	91,581	3,217

*Animals captured prior and post-bait distribution.

Source: Dr. Tonie Roche, National Wildlife Health Center, USGS, Madison, WI

STATUS OF BLACK-FOOTED FERRETS IN THE WILD

Overall, the black-footed ferret population in the wild has been declining since 2009 as plague continues to impact reintroduction sites.

Although survey data is lacking, some sites are considered extirpated. These include: BLM 40 Complex, MT; Wolf Creek, CO;

Espee Ranch, AZ; and Northern Cheyenne Reservation, MT.

The only site that shows stable to positive growth is Aubrey Valley, AZ; all other sites appear to be declining with the possible exception of Shirley Basin, WY and Cheyenne River Reservation, SD, where survey data is lacking for 2013.

The status at two sites is "unknown" due to a lack of information and monitoring program, these include: Janos, Mexico and Rosebud Indian Reservation, SD.

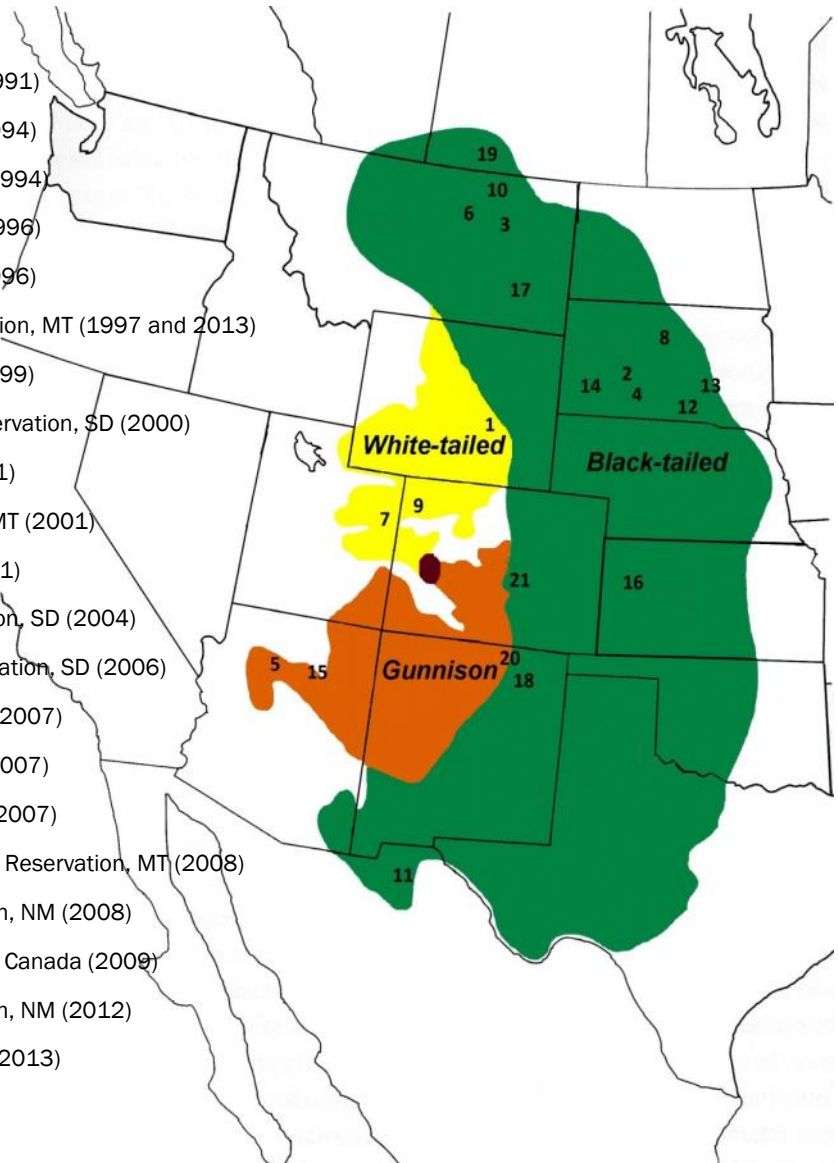
Reference: Black-footed Ferret Recovery and Implementation Team Conservation Subcommittee Report. Prepared by: Randall Griebel, CS Chair, December 11, 2013, Presented in Tempe, AZ, 4pp.

BLACK-FOOTED FERRET REINTRODUCTION SITES

"Thanks to its short generation time, this highly productive species can rebound quickly when conditions improve."

- Pete Gober, Recovery Coordinator

1. Shirley Basin, WY (1991)
2. Badlands NP, SD (1994)
3. UL Bend NWR, MT (1994)
4. Conata Basin, SD (1996)
5. Aubrey Valley, AZ (1996)
6. Ft. Belknap Reservation, MT (1997 and 2013)
7. Coyote Basin, UT (1999)
8. Cheyenne River Reservation, SD (2000)
9. Wolf Creek, CO (2001)
10. BLM 40-Complex, MT (2001)
11. Janos, Mexico (2001)
12. Rosebud Reservation, SD (2004)
13. Lower Brule Reservation, SD (2006)
14. Wind Cave NP, SD (2007)
15. Espee Ranch, AZ (2007)
16. Logan County, KS (2007)
17. Northern Cheyenne Reservation, MT (2008)
18. Vermejo Park Ranch, NM (2008)
19. Grasslands NP, SK, Canada (2009)
20. Vermejo Park Ranch, NM (2012)
21. Walker Ranch, CO (2013)



Source: USFWS

APPROXIMATE NUMBER OF BLACK-FOOTED FERRETS RELEASED AND EXTANT IN THE WILD, 1991-2013¹

Site (year initiated)	Prairie dog species	Number of ferrets released	Minimum fall population ² 2008	Minimum fall population 2011	Minimum fall population 2013 ³
Shirley Basin, WY (1991)	WTPD	534	196	203 ⁴	48 ⁵
UL Bend NWR, MT (1994)	BTPD	263	13	20	28
Badlands NP, SD (1994)	BTPD	225	20	33	18
Aubrey Valley, AZ (1996)	GPD	412	66	75	98
Conata Basin, SD (1996)	BTPD	161	292	72	45
Ft. Belknap, MT (1997)	BTPD	134	No data	No data	32
Coyote Basin, UT (1999)	WTPD	458	25	3	5
Cheyenne River, SD (2000)	BTPD	379	150	25 ⁶	28
BLM 40 complex, MT (2001)	BTPD	95	3	No data	0
Wolf Creek, CO (2001)	WTPD	254	16	No data	0
Janos, Mexico (2001)	BTPD	299	13	No data	No data
Rosebud, SD (2003)	BTPD	162	30	No data	No data
Lower Brule, SD (2006)	BTPD	107	26	12	27 ⁵
Wind Cave NP, SD (2007)	BTPD	72	26	46	11
Espee Ranch, AZ (2007)	GPD	77	No data	No data	0
Smokey Hill, KS (2007)	BTPD	125	66	38	6
N. Cheyenne, MT (2008)	BTPD	88	No data	No data	0
Vermejo Ranch, NM (2008)	BTPD	167	No data	5	0
Grasslands NP, Canada (2009)	BTPD	75	NA	12	3
Vermejo Ranch, NM (2012)	GPD	46	NA	NA	36
Walker Ranch, CO (2013)	BTPD	55	NA	NA	55
Total		4,188	942	544	440

¹Source: Unpublished data from USFWS NBFFCC.

²Minimum fall population counts are derived from spotlight surveys and trapping efforts except in Shirley Basin, WY, where a model was used to estimate fall population levels.

³Inclement weather precluded complete fall population surveys at Badlands National Park, Aubrey Valley, Conata Basin, and Wind Cave National Park in 2013.

⁴Partial survey conducted in 2010.

⁵Survey conducted in 2012.

⁶Partial survey.

“The single, most feasible action that would benefit black-footed ferret recovery is to improve prairie dog conservation.”

- Black-footed Ferret Recovery Plan, Revised 2013

INCENTIVES

In 2013, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) experimented with a pilot program to encourage ferret conservation in South Dakota and Utah.

Based on that experience, NRCS has decided to conduct a State-driven effort with National coordination rather than a National Initiative for ferret conservation in 2014.



NRCS consults with a landowner.
Photo Credit: NRCS

Four states intend to participate in the coming year: Nebraska, Colorado, Montana, and South Dakota. These states participating will allocate a portion of their general Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and/or Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) funding toward the effort.

Reference: Annual Report of Activities for the BFFRIT Incentives Subcommittee, Prepared by: Phyllis Ann Philipps, Incentives Subcommittee Chair, December 13, 2013, Presented in Tempe, AZ, 2pp.

Phyllis Philipps, Incentives Subcommittee Chair (Natural Resource Conservation Service, Denver, CO)

PRAIRIE DOG MANAGEMENT

In 2013 the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF), USFWS, and USDA-WS worked to develop a mechanism for providing \$300,000 of NFWF funds to U.S. Department of Agriculture—Wildlife Services (USDA-WS) to support disease management and control of prairie dogs at the boundaries of ferret release locations, as well as provide targeted plague management for selected sites.

Boundary control is currently taking place at the Kansas reintroduction site and plans are in place to fund this program through the agreement for FY14.

USDA-WS also conducted disease management and ground surveys for boundary control at the Rita Blanca National Grasslands in TX this year, with an eye toward active management on certain areas in FY14.



A black-tailed prairie dog.
Photo Credit: Kimberly Tamkun, USFWS

Reference: Black-footed Ferret Recovery Implementation Prairie Dog Management Subcommittee: 2013 Annual Report, Michael J. Bodenchuk, Subcommittee Chair, December 13, 2013, resented in Tempe, AZ, 1p.

Mike Bodenchuk, Prairie Dog Management Subcommittee Chair (APHIS—Wildlife Services, San Antonio, TX)

*Special thanks to
Phyllis Philipps,
Incentives
Subcommittee Chair!*

JOHN EMMERICH 2013 RECOVERY CHAMPION!



2013 Recovery Champion John Emmerich.
Photo Credit: USFWS

John Emmerich, former Deputy Director of the Wyoming Game and Fish Department (WGFD) in Cheyenne, Wyoming, and Chair of the Black-footed Ferret Recovery Implementation Team won the prestigious Recovery Champion Award in 2013!

John has inspired trust and generated collaboration resulting in achievements throughout the 12-state historical range of the species.

Uniting State, Tribal, Federal, and private partners, John

has brought about new reintroduction sites, promoted vaccine development to address sylvatic plague concerns, and developed a vision of practical initiatives necessary to delist what remains one of the most endangered mammals in North America.

By recruiting new team members, most recently the NRCS and APHIS-WS, he has added expertise and resources, creating a sustainable path for both wildlife managers and private landowners.

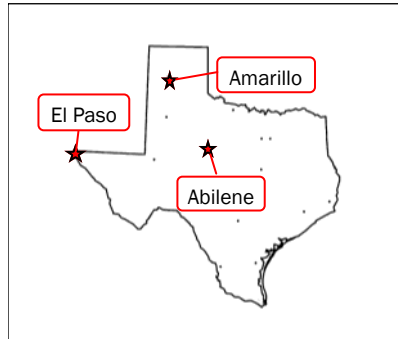
OUTREACH

In 2013 the Outreach and Information Committee developed a Strategic Communication Plan including communication goals and objectives, key messages, and recommended communication materials and techniques for use with target audiences.

In addition, they produced fact sheets on the Safe Harbor Agreement and prairie dog management for dissemination.

CPW, USFWS, and CMZ presented information on black-footed ferret recovery to approximately 50 legislators, private landowners, and county commissioners prior to the reintroduction of ferrets at the Walker Ranch in Pueblo, Colorado. The release prompted

coverage by several media outlets including the front page of the Denver Post, USGS, the Forest Service, and



Three new display sites in Texas in 2013.

Prairie Wildlife Research highlighted the ferret recovery work on National Public Radio (December 2013).

NBFFCC also hosted film

crews from the British Broadcasting Company (BBC), National Geographic, and Colorado Parks and Wildlife.

The Fort Collins Museum of Discovery's live black-footed ferret display (NBFFCC outreach ferrets) and its associated prairie conservation message were viewed by approximately 120,000 visitors in 2013.

In 2013, we established three new ferret displays in Texas, bringing our total to 21 displays across the country. Also, we partnered with LightHawk, an organization that flies for conservation, to transport new display ferrets to Wisconsin.

Reference: Black-footed Ferret Recovery Implementation Team Outreach and Information Subcommittee (OIS) Status Report – December 2013, Gail Keirn, OIS Chair, December 13, 2013, Presented in Tempe, AZ, 2pp.

Gail Keirn, Outreach Subcommittee Chair (APHIS—Wildlife Services, Fort Collins, CO)
Ken Morgan, Outreach Subcommittee Vice Chair (Colorado Parks and Wildlife, Denver, CO)

THANK YOU!

We are indebted to several individuals who relinquished their positions on the Recovery Team in 2013:

Ross Melinchuk, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, outgoing Chair of the Executive Committee, is replaced by Michael Thabault, USFWS.

John Emmerich, WGFD (retired), outgoing Chair of the Incentives Subcommittee, is replaced by Phyllis Philipps, NRCS.

Gail Keirn, APHIS-WS, outgoing Chair of the Outreach Subcommittee, is replaced by Kimberly Tamkun, USFWS.

Nicole Mantz, Cheyenne Mountain Zoo, out-going SSP Education Advisor, is replaced by Laura Linn, SCBI.

We also thank **Elise Boeke**, NRCS, for substantial work on the Safe Harbor Agreement, and three volunteers who have helped greatly at NBFFCC: **Dr. Debbie Grossblat**, **Josh Roth**, and **Becky Hutchens**.

Ferret recovery has also benefited from the generous donations of several corporate supporters:

Shepherd Specialty Papers makes the bedding for ferrets at NBFFCC and ships it to us at cost.

Abaxis has donated a VetScan blood chemistry analysis machine to NBFFCC.

Avid has provided free PIT tag scanners to NBFFCC.



Members of the BFFRIT Executive Committee include representatives of the following organizations: Association of Zoos and Aquariums • APHIS/Wildlife Services, USDA • Arizona Game and Fish Department • Audubon of Kansas • Bureau of Indian Affairs, USDI • Bureau of Land Management, USDI • Canada, Parks Canada Grasslands National Park • Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe • Colorado Parks and Wildlife • Defenders of Wildlife • US Fish and Wildlife US Army • US Geological Survey, Biological Resources Venture and Assiniboine Tribe (Ft. Belknap, MT) • Sioux Tribe (South Dakota) • Mexico: University of Fish, Wildlife and Parks • Natural Resources and Foundation • National Park Service, USDI • National Mexico) • Nebraska Game and Parks Commission • Game and Fish Department • Northern Cheyenne Conservation • Prairie Wildlife Research • Rosebud and Parks Department • Texas Parks and Wildlife Department • The Nature Conservancy (Kansas and South Dakota) • Turner Endangered Species Fund • Utah Division of Wildlife Resources • World Wildlife Fund • Wyoming Game and Fish Department



**Black-footed Ferret
Recovery Implementation**

National Black-footed Ferret
Conservation Center
PO Box 190
Wellington, CO 80549

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E-mail: Julie_Lyke@fws.gov

We're on the Web!
Blackfootedferret.org



The Black-footed Ferret Recovery Implementation Team (BFFRIT) was created in 1996 to integrate the expertise and resources of various partners contributing to recovery of the black-footed ferret. BFFRIT is a multi-agency conservation effort led by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and includes representatives from federal, state and tribal governments, zoos, private landowners and nonprofit organizations. The team was created pursuant to Section 4(f)(2) of the amended Endangered Species Act which authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to procure the services of appropriate public and private agencies, institutions, and other qualified persons to help implement endangered species recovery plans.

Although the role of BFFRIT is strictly advisory in nature, many team members are hands-on participants in captive breeding, reintroduction and population monitoring efforts. Members assist in review of the recovery plan and provide recommendations to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service regarding the appropriate conduct, methods and priorities for black-footed ferret recovery efforts.

LOOKING AHEAD

There is never a dull moment in black-footed ferret recovery so we are sure to have an eventful 2014. Here are just a few of our expectations for the coming year:

- Continuing captive breeding and preconditioning success.
- Development of a 10(j) non-essential experimental population rule that will facilitate reintroductions in the state of Wyoming.
- Reintroducing ferrets at a new site on Soapstone Natural Area in Fort Collins, Colorado.
- Begin dusting for plague at the Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge to lay the groundwork for ferret reintroduction in 2015.
- Work with NRCS to implement an incentive program for black-footed ferrets in Colorado, Montana, Nebraska, and South Dakota.

- Work with Animal Plant Health Inspection Service/ Wildlife Services (APHIS WS) and others to implement range-wide disease and boundary control and plague management programs for management of prairie dogs.
- Research aiming to map the ferret genome in order to identify the effects of cap-

tive breeding and the potential for genetic enhancement from ancient DNA.

- Expansion of oral plague vaccine field trials to additional sites and preliminary results from the first year of data.

Stay tuned as we work together for the recovery of this species.



Black-footed ferret in captivity.
Photo Credit: Kimberly Tamkun, USFWS