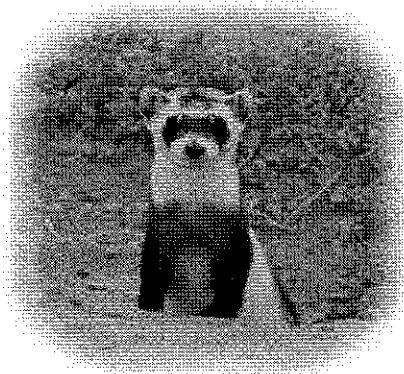




DEPARTMENT OF
NATURAL
RESOURCES



**Black-footed Ferret Reintroduction Summary
For Colorado Legislators as per HB00-1314
Prepared by the Colorado Division of Wildlife; 2/16/2005**

Goal

To release sufficient numbers of Black-footed ferrets into the Wolf Creek Management Area to establish a pre-breeding population of at least 20 adult ferrets by the fifth breeding season following the 2001 release.

Reintroduction

- 43 Black-footed Ferrets (BFF) were released in fall of 2001 in 2 separate areas - Coyote Basin (8 BFF's) and Wolf Creek (35 BFF's)
- 28 BFF's released in the fall of 2002 – all in Wolf Creek
- 63 BFF's released in fall of 2003 – all in Wolf Creek
- 44 BFF's released in fall of 2004 – all in Wolf Creek

Monitoring

- 10 day intensive spotlighting effort (616 hours) conducted in late August, 2004 to determine persistence of released ferrets and document if reproduction occurred.
- Spotlighting continued with small field crew throughout the fall/early winter
- Snowtracking occurred in late November and December and is scheduled to continue throughout the winter.
- Monitoring Results: Wolf Creek: A minimum number of 6 individual ferrets were located in the WCMA during 2004; one male was captured and examined in August, 2004 and was in good health. This ferret was released in fall of 2003 and was captured 3 miles from original release location. This male was relocated again in December, 2004; 3 miles from the August captured location! 2 females released on October 6, 2004 were relocated on October 26, 2004 and one was relocated again on November 21, 2004.

Habitat Evaluation/Monitoring

- Prairie dog transects completed Spring of 2004 to determine habitat suitability for 2004 release
 - In 2003, prairie dog populations were up by 13% from the 2002 survey, and densities were up again slightly in 2004.
- Carnivore sampling was completed in July, 2004 for detection of plague, tularemia, and distemper. Twenty coyotes were tested. Results from sampling showed negligible levels of plague (only 1 juvenile tested “moderately positive”) and canine distemper. The most significant pathogen noted was for tularemia, which is common in Colorado rodents and, therefore, not surprising.

Upcoming Efforts

- Monitoring this spring will utilize dogs trained to scent burrows recently used by ferrets
- Habitat evaluation will be conducted this spring (prairie dog transects)
- Post-release monitoring will continue utilizing spotlighting and winter snowtracking
- Disease monitoring will continue
- Allocation request will be made to USFWS this spring for additional ferrets for the fall 2005 release