

Swift Fox (*Vulpes velox*)**Status: NSS4, NatureServe G3 S2****Abundance:** Common

Introduction: Historically the swift fox inhabited southern Saskatchewan and Alberta south across Montana and the Dakotas through the Great Plains states to northwestern Texas and eastern New Mexico. In Wyoming, it occurs primarily east of the Continental Divide, and is considered common in Wyoming. The species was removed from the Endangered Species Act Candidate List in 2002 because of conservation efforts of western states and the Swift Fox Conservation Team. The Wyoming Game and Fish Department classifies it as a Species of Special Concern with a Native Species Status of 4 (NSS4) because population status and trends are unknown, although they are suspected to be stable, and because its habitat is vulnerable, although there is no ongoing significant loss of habitat.

Habitat: The swift fox primarily inhabits shortgrass and mixed-grass prairies, although it often uses highway and railroad right-of-ways, agricultural areas, and sagebrush-grasslands. It is closely associated with prairie dog colonies and uses underground dens year-round. It selects habitat with low-growing vegetation, relatively flat terrain, friable soils, and high den availability.

Problems:

- Human related activities in the early 1800s through the mid 1900s contributed to a restricted distribution and abundance throughout the range of the swift fox. Some of these activities include the loss of native prairie habitat, predator control campaigns, unregulated trapping and hunting, and rodent control programs;
- Very vulnerable to trapping, poisoning, and death on highways; and
- Population trends and distribution are poorly known in Wyoming.

Conservation Actions:

- Continue and improve statewide inventories to determine population trends and distribution.
- Continue participating in and supporting the Swift Fox Conservation Team;
- Designate crucial habitat and habitat corridors, and identify where habitat conservation and management efforts should focus to protect, enhance, or improve suitable habitat;
- Develop and maintain a positive relationship with landowners on whose property swift fox occur. Educate and cultivate a feeling of participation in landowners to promote beneficial land use practices and management for swift fox on private land;
- Determine the effects of competition from red foxes and coyotes; and
- Integrate management of the swift fox with other Species of Special Concern that are dependent on grasslands, such as the black-footed ferret, Ferruginous Hawk, Mountain Plover, black-tailed prairie dog, and Burrowing Owl.

References and Additional Reading:

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