

Fisher - *Martes pennanti*

Abundance: Rare

Status: NSSU

NatureServe: G5 S1

Population Status: distribution is suspected to be restricted; species has spotty distribution in Wyoming; The IUCN reports that population status are unknown throughout its range and declines have been reported in some parts of the range.

Limiting Factor: Habitat (and Human Activity): limiting factors are unknown

Comment:

Introduction

The fisher occurs only in North America, throughout northern coniferous and mixed forests of Canada and into the Northern Rockies in the West, from Minnesota to Upper Michigan and Wisconsin in the Midwest, and throughout most of the forested regions of the northeastern states. Fishers are generalized predators with a diet of small to medium sized birds and mammals, and also consume deer carrion and fruit. When abundant, porcupines and snowshoe hare are the preferred prey. Although sightings of the fisher are reported in most mountain ranges, few documented records exist for Wyoming and are limited to the extreme northwestern part of the state. Unlike other forest carnivores, such as the lynx or wolverine, even historical records (pre-1970) are lacking and limited to one specimen in the Bighorn Mountains, 1964.

Habitat

The fisher inhabits coniferous forests, aspen, and cottonwood-riparian areas. Older forests with a substantial understory of tree sizes and shapes, small patches of shrubs, snags, fallen trees, and limbs close to the ground provide good fisher foraging habitat. Fishers also prefer large diameter logs or snags for natal and maternal dens.

Problems

- h Habitat specialist that occurs in a disjunct pattern within a limited portion of the state.
- h No ongoing efforts to delineate important habitats in Wyoming.
- h Population densities and trends are not well known.
- h Species is vulnerable to population declines resulting in loss of habitat due to climate change (e.g., mountain pine beetle kill).

Conservation Actions

- h Conduct inventories for species in all suitable habitats in the state.
- h Delineate important habitats and work cooperatively with land management agencies to maintain these within the designated areas
- h Design vegetation treatments, fire management plans, and grazing regimes in habitat that mimic and restore natural landscape patterns and disturbance processes, retain and recruit old growth and woody debris, maintain habitat connectivity, and maintain the native composition of herbaceous plant and shrub communities.
- h Designate important habitats, habitat corridors, and identify where habitat conservation and management efforts should focus to protect, enhance, or improve suitable habitat.
- h Integrate management actions with those that benefit other boreal forest carnivore species (e.g., American marten, Canada lynx, Wolverine, etc).

Monitoring/Research

No on-going monitoring.

Recent Developments

Petition to list the fisher under Endangered Species Act is pending.

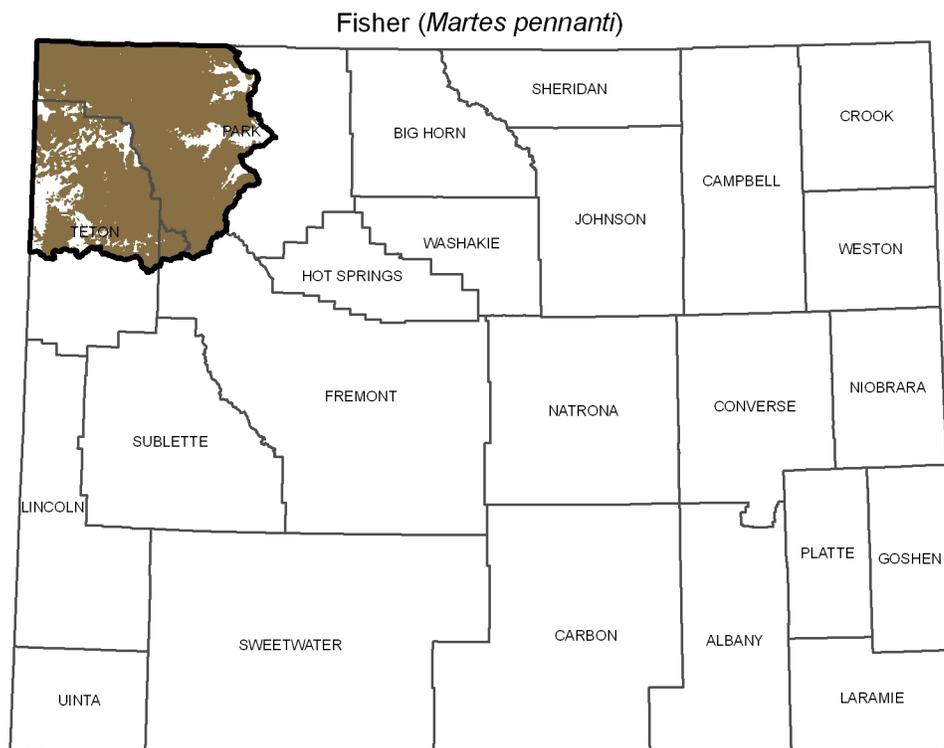
References

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SOURCE: Digital maps of ranges and predicted distributions for Wyoming Species of Greatest Conservation Need: April 2010. Wyoming Natural Diversity Database. University of Wyoming, Laramie, Wyoming. Note that brown indicates the predicted distribution of the species; heavy black lines indicate outermost boundaries of possible occurrence.