

Swift Fox - *Vulpes velox*

Abundance: Common

Status: NSS4 (Cb)

NatureServe: G3 S2

Population Status: Distribution is secure and the species is widely distributed; protected from take. Populations in Shirley Basin have been increasing. Data for the balance of the state is lacking. The IUCN considers the rangewide population to be stable

Limiting Factor: Habitat (and Human Activity and Competition): limiting factors are severe, new increased risks due to secondary poisoning effects from Rozol.

Comment:

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 (Kahn et al. 1997). In Wyoming, it occurs primarily east of the Continental Divide, and is considered common in Wyoming (Orabona et al. 2009). 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.

Habitat

The swift fox primarily inhabits shortgrass and mixed-grass prairies with gently rolling or level landscapes (Kahn et al. 1997). In Wyoming, swift fox also utilize habitats that are considered atypical, such as sagebrush steppe with low-growing vegetation, relatively flat terrain, friable soils, and high den availability. (Olson and Lindzey 2002).

Problems

- h Population densities and trends are not well known.
- h Species very vulnerable to trapping, poisoning, and road kill.
- h Recent increase use of toxicants (e.g., rodenticides) may negatively impact species (e.g., primary or secondary poisoning).
- h Potential impacts due to energy development are not quantified.

Conservation Actions

- h Conduct inventories for species in all suitable habitats in the state.
- h Monitor population densities and trends. If monitoring data show that populations are declining, provide information to the WGFDC Commission to allow them to evaluate and consider an appropriate response.
- h Continue active participation with the interagency conservation efforts.
- h Designate important habitats, habitat corridors, and identify where habitat conservation and management efforts should focus to protect, enhance, or improve suitable habitat.
- h Educate and cultivate a feeling of participation in landowners to promote beneficial land use practices and management for species on private land and reduce anthropogenic impacts (e.g., toxicant use).
- h Integrate management of the species with other species that are dependent on grasslands, such as the black-footed ferret, Ferruginous Hawk, Mountain Plover, black-tailed prairie dog, swift fox, and Burrowing Owl.

Monitoring/Research

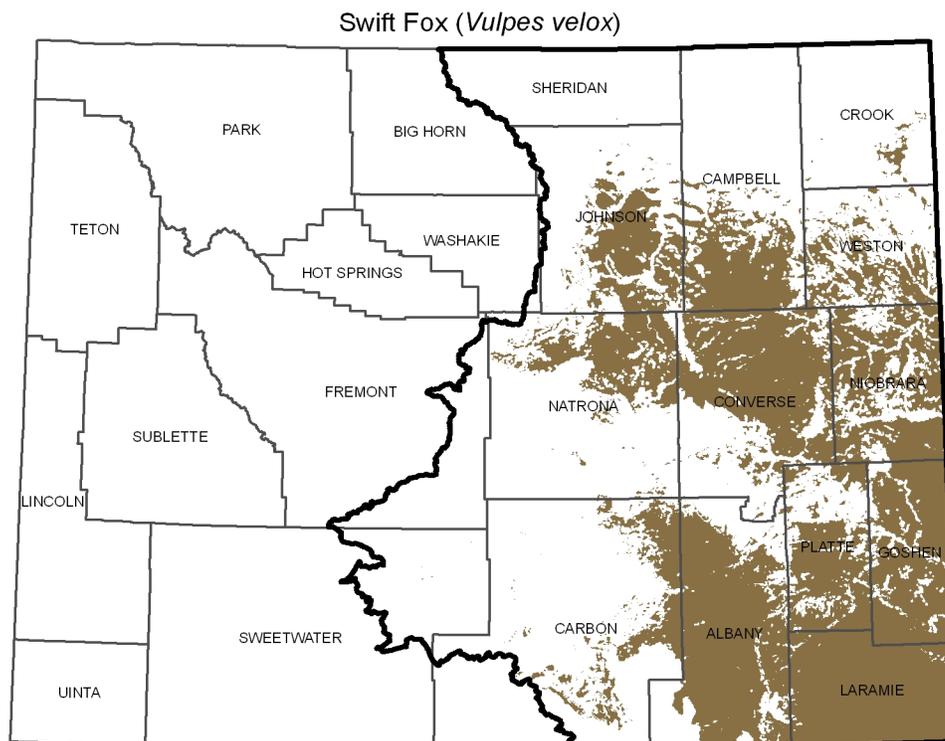
Efforts are underway (FY10 & FY11) to implement a monitoring approach based on presence/absence (e.g., occupancy modeling). The work is being funded by State Wildlife Grant.

Recent Developments

None

References

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- Kahn R, Fox L, Horner P, Giddings B, Roy C, eds. 1997. Conservation assessment and conservation strategy for swift fox in the United States. Swift Fox Conservation Team. 54 p.
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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.