

Black-tailed Prairie Dog (*Cynomys ludovicianus*)

Conservation Status Rank Summary

September 16, 2024

For details on assessment and ranking methodology, see: [Conservation Status Assessment Definitions, Process, Rank Factors, and Calculation of State Ranks for Montana Species](#)

Rarity and Trends

Rank Factor	Date Assessed	Value	Score	Data Source	Comments
Rarity					
Range Extent	2024-09-16	Y: 216551.2 km ²	4.710	MTNHP Range Maps	None
Area of Occupancy	2024-09-16	9926 4km ² cells	4.810	MTNHP Modeling	None
Number of Occurrences	2024-09-16	4074	5.500	MTNHP Databases	None
Population Size	2017-04-20		-	MTNHP Species Rank Data Table	Factor not used in ranking. Unknown. Methodology: NS (2003) Original Score: U
# of Occurrences in Good Condition	2024-09-16	0	0.000	Antolin et al. 2002	Plague is present state-wide and impact the entire range of this species
% of Area Occupied in Good Condition			-		Factor not used in ranking.
Environmental Specificity			-		Factor not used in ranking.
Rarity is calculated by averaging weighted factor scores: $((4.71 \times 1) + (4.81 \times 2) + (5.50 \times 1) + (0.00 \times 2)) / 6 = 3.31$					
Trends					
Short-term Trend	2024-09-16		-	MTNHP	Factor not used in ranking. Comprehensive surveys to determine trend in acreage of colonies have not been completed within the last 10 years
Long-term Trend	2018-09-26		-0.140	MTNHP Species Rank Data Table	Since European arrival substantial declines have occurred due to persecution and the introduction of plague Methodology: NS (2003) Original Score: D
Trends score is calculated by summing weighted short and long-term trend scores: $((-0.14 \times 1)) = -0.14$					

Threats

Rank Factor	Date Assessed	Value	Score	Data Source	Comments
Threats					
Overall Threat Impact		High	1.830		None
Intrinsic Vulnerability			-		Factor not used in ranking.
Threat score is calculated from Overall Threat Impact when available or Intrinsic Vulnerability if not: (1.83) = 1.83					

Individual Threats Data

Threat Category	Date Assessed	Impact Score	Scope	Severity	Immediacy	Comments
Biological Resource Use	2024-09-16	Low	Small	Moderate	High	Recreational shooting may have a minor impact on local colonies, but the scope of this threat is limited
Invasive & Other Problematic Species, Genes & Diseases	2024-09-16	High	Pervasive	Serious	High	Plague has contributed to declines and fragmentation of colonies across the species range.
Threat Tally: 0 - Very High, 1 - High, 0 - Medium, 1 - Low Overall Threat Impact* = High						

*See [Conservation Status Assessment Definitions, Process, Rank Factors, and Calculation of State Ranks for Montana Species](#) for calculation of Overall Threat Impact based on the number and impact of individual threats.

Conservation Status Rank Calculation

Raw score

Rarity: $(3.31 \times 70\%)$ + Threats: $(1.83 \times 30\%)$ + Trends: (-0.14) = 2.72

Calculated Rank: S3

Accepted Rank	S3
Date Approved	1996-06-01
Approval Authority	Montana Species of Concern Committee
Rank Justification	Species is common and widespread, but has declined due to mortality and colony fragmentation due to Sylvatic Plague. Trend within the last 10 years is unknown.

Supplementary Information

Montana Natural Heritage Program. 2021. Conservation Status Assessment Definitions, Process, Rank Factors, and Calculation of State Ranks for Montana Species. 18 p.

https://mtnhp.mt.gov/docs/Montana_State_Rank_Criteria_20211201.pdf

Montana Field Guide Species Account:

<https://fieldguide.mt.gov/speciesDetail.aspx?elcode=AMAFB06010>

Predicted Suitable Habitat Model:

<https://mtnhp.mt.gov/resources/models/?elcode=AMAFB06010>

Information Needs

Information needs are assessed by considering the availability of factors used to assess species status as well as the quality of these assessments. Current information availability and quality to inform Conservation Status Rank for this species are highlighted.

Rank Factor	Assessment Category	Value	Criteria
General Status	Status Quality	Adequate	Calculated rank has low uncertainty and is represented by a single rank (e.g. S3); accepted rank may be adjusted to a range rank (e.g. S2S3)
		Poor	Rank assessed as SU or calculated rank has notable uncertainty and corresponds to a range rank with 2 or more values (e.g. S2?, S1S3, or S4S5)
Rarity	Range Quality	Adequate	Range polygon adequately represents area of probable occupancy and does not include substantial unoccupied areas; range may be adequately defined and still include areas of unsuitable habitat (e.g. mountain ranges for plains species)
		Marginal	Range polygon defined, but may include or exclude notable areas where the species may or may not occur on the landscape
		Poor	Range polygon not defined
	Habitat Quality	Adequate	Species-habitat relationship is well-defined (e.g. relevant literature or robust habitat model available)
		Marginal	Understanding of species-habitat relationship is adequate among some but not all habitats (e.g. literature covers similar habitats outside of Montana or habitat model performance is only somewhat adequate)
		Poor	Species-habitat relationship is not well understood
Threats	Threat Quality	Adequate	Threat Impact is a single value (including "Unthreatened")
		Marginal	Threat Impact assessed at more than one value (e.g. "High - Medium")
		Poor	Threat Impact is Unknown but Intrinsic Vulnerability is assessed
		Unknown	Threat Impact is Unknown and Intrinsic Vulnerability is not assessed
Trends	Recency	Current	Short-term Trend assessment date less than 10 years old
		Out of Date but Adequate	Short-term Trend assessment date is more than 10 years old or Unknown, but species is Unthreatened
		Out of Date	Short-term Trend assessment date more than 10 years old
		Not Available	Short-term Trend data are not available
	Trend Quality	Sufficient	Short-term Trend assessed at a single value or multiple values with a minimum trend greater than -10% (stable or increasing)
		Unknown but Sufficient	Short-term Trend is Unknown, but species is Unthreatened
		Poor	Short-term Trend is less than -10% (in decline) with two or more values selected
		Unknown	Short-term Trend is Unknown

Summary of Information Availability

Data to assess status are available, but short-term trend is out of date as colony coverage has not been assessed across the state in over 10 years.

Summary of Information Needs

Analysis of the number of colonies and acreage of these colonies is needed to assess trend and maintain a valid status rank. Assessment of arial imagery should be conducted following previous protocols.

Additional Threat Details

The table below contains the complete threats assessment for this species. While the Conservation Status Rank Calculation is based on cumulative, broadly categorized (Level 1) threats data, threats are assessed and tracked for more specifically categorized (Level 2) threats when available.

Threat Category	Date Assessed	Assessed By	Data Source	Scope	Severity	Immediacy	Comments
Biological Resource Use - 5.1 - Hunting & Collecting Terrestrial Animals	2024-09-16	Dan Bachen	Vosburgh and Irby 1998	Small	Moderate	High	Recreational shooting may have a minor impact on local colonies, but the scope of this threat is limited
Invasive & Other Problematic Species, Genes & Diseases - 8.1 - Invasive Non-Native/Alien Species/Diseases	2024-09-16	Dan Bachen	Keuler at al. 2020; Cully et al. 2010	Pervasive	Serious	High	Plague has contributed to declines and fragmentation of colonies across the species range.