

Western Spotted Skunk (*Spilogale gracilis*)

Conservation Status Rank Summary

September 25, 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 | 2024-09-25 | Y: 113954.8 km ² | 3.930 | MTNHP Range Maps | None |
| Area of Occupancy | 2025-01-31 | | [2.060, 4.810] | MTNHP, Expert Opinion | H from NHP predicted habitat models but not validated with observations so increasing uncertainty |
| Number of Occurrences | | | - | | Factor not used in ranking. |
| Population Size | | | - | | Factor not used in ranking. |
| # of Occurrences in Good Condition | | | - | | Factor not used in ranking. |
| % of Area Occupied in Good Condition | | | - | | Factor not used in ranking. |
| Environmental Specificity | 2024-09-25 | Unknown | - | Expert Opinion | Factor not used in ranking. Species is infrequently detected and assessing habitat associations in Montana is problematic |
| Rarity is calculated by averaging weighted factor scores: $((3.93 \times 1) + ([2.06, 4.81] \times 2)) / 3 = [2.68, 4.52]$ | | | | | |
| Trends | | | | | |
| Short-term Trend | 2012-01-04 | | - | MTNHP Species Rank Data Table | Factor not used in ranking. No data on trends available. Methodology: NS (2003) Original Score: U |
| Long-term Trend | 2012-01-04 | | [-0.070, 0.070] | MTNHP Species Rank Data Table | Riparian areas, rock outcrops and other habitats the species uses have probably been stable (+/- 25%) since European arrival. Methodology: NS (2003) Original Score: E |
| Trends score is calculated by summing weighted short and long-term trend scores: $(([-0.07, 0.07] \times 1)) = [-0.07, 0.07]$ | | | | | |

Threats

| Rank Factor | Date Assessed | Value | Score | Data Source | Comments |
|--|---------------|---------------------------------|----------------|-------------------------------|--|
| Threats | | | | | |
| Overall Threat Impact | | Unknown | - | | Factor not used in ranking. |
| Intrinsic Vulnerability | 2012-01-04 | Moderately to not intrin. vuln. | [2.750, 5.500] | MTNHP Species Rank Data Table | Methodology: NS (2003) Original Score: C |
| Threat score is calculated from Overall Threat Impact when available or Intrinsic Vulnerability if not: ([2.75, 5.50]) = [2.75, 5.50] | | | | | |

Individual Threats Data

| Threat Category | Date Assessed | Impact Score | Scope | Severity | Immediacy | Comments |
|---|---------------|--------------|-------|----------|-----------|----------|
| No individual threats data used in ranking this species | | | | | | |

Conservation Status Rank Calculation

Raw score

Rarity: $([2.68, 4.52] \times 70\%) + \text{Threats: } ([2.75, 5.50] \times 30\%) + \text{Trends: } ([-0.07, 0.07]) = [2.63, 4.88]$

Calculated Rank: S3S5

| | |
|---------------------------|--|
| Accepted Rank | SU |
| Date Approved | 2024-09-30 |
| Approval Authority | Montana Species of Concern Committee |
| Rank Justification | Species is rare and difficult to detect. It has been observed 17 times in the state and only twice in the last decade. Range is uncertain, trends and threats are poorly characterized |

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=AMAJF05020>

Predicted Suitable Habitat Model:

<https://mtnhp.mt.gov/resources/models/?elcode=AMAJF05020>

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

Species is known from sparse incidental records across southern Montana. Range may be larger than currently assessed. Trend and threats are unknown.

Summary of Information Needs

Baseline surveys to determine species distribution and establish monitoring will provide data to assess range, threats, and trend.

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 |
|--|---------------|-------------|-------------|-------|----------|-----------|----------|
| No Threat Identified - 0.5 - Unknown/Undetermined Threat | 2024-09-25 | None | None | None | None | None | None |
| No threats data available for this species | | | | | | | |