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## Additional black-footed ferret (*Mustela nigripes*) reports from Wyoming

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## ADDITIONAL BLACK-FOOTED FERRET (*MUSTELA NIGRIPES*) REPORTS FROM WYOMING

Tim W. Clark<sup>1</sup> and Thomas M. Campbell III<sup>2</sup>

ABSTRACT.— Thirty-nine previously unpublished reports of the endangered black-footed ferret from Wyoming are listed with dates, locations, number of animals, sources, and comments.

Historic geographic range of the black-footed ferret (*Mustela nigripes*) coincided closely with that of the prairie dog (*Cynomys* spp.), occurring over most of the Great Plains as well as semiarid grasslands and certain intermountain basins of North America (Hall and Kelson 1959, Hillman and Clark 1980). The present range is unknown, but is undoubtedly smaller than historic range due to habitat destruction and possibly other factors. Recent ferret observations and evidence, although mostly undocumented, come from South Dakota, Colorado, Wyoming, Montana, North Dakota, and Kansas.

Clark (1978, 1980) reported the historical range of ferrets in Wyoming to be nearly statewide. Ferret sightings and evidence come from nearly every county in Wyoming except Teton County and Yellowstone National Park—the same areas where prairie dogs reside. Further evidence reported by Clark (1978) showed that ferrets ranged further west in Wyoming than previously known.

Methods used by us to evaluate black-footed ferret sightings have been described (Clark 1980). This paper reports 39 previously unpublished (except Murie 1954) black-footed ferret reports from Wyoming.

ADDENDUM: A male ferret from Park County was killed by a ranch dog on 26 Sep-

tember 1981. This specimen, verified by the U.S. National Museum and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, is the first complete carcass since 1965 (Clark 1980). The ferret was reported to us by Jim Lawrence of Wyoming Game and Fish Department.

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TABLE 1. Black-footed ferret reports from Wyoming in addition to those reported in Clark (1980).

Report	Date and location	Animals	Source and comments
1	ca 1875-1900, Crow Indian Nation	1	D. T. Vernon; skin in Colter Bay Indian Museum, Grant Teton National Park, Wyoming.
2	ca 1920, eastern Wyoming	10	U.S. Biological Survey (1928); killed in predator trapping programs.
3	ca 1920-30, north fork of Little Missouri River, Crook County, T57N R65,66,67W	3	W. C. Dexter, Wyoming Game & Fish Dept.; observed on prairie dog town.
4	1922, Wyoming or Nebraska	1	U.S. Biological Survey (1928); killed by trapper in Wyoming-Nebraska district.
5	ca 1940, eastern Wyoming	"a few"	W. Garst has "a few" captive black-footed ferrets (Murie 1954).
6	ca 1946-50, U.S. Hwy. 30 between Wamsutter and Rock Springs, Sweetwater County	1	P. Muchmore, Wyoming Game & Fish Dept.; road killed, skin formerly in Wyoming Game & Fish Dept. collection.
7	1948, Aug, 24 km west of Laramie on the old Jack Markely Ranch, Albany County	2	E. Cornelius, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service trapper; trapped them in coyote sets on a prairie dog town.
8	1950s, 16 km east of Medicine Bow, Carbon County	1	J. Sterret, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service trapper; trapped in coyote set on prairie dog town.
9	1952-53, summer, Junction County Road 610 (Marshall) and U.S. Hwy. 30, Albany County	1	A. L. Tanner, Wyoming Game & Fish Dept.; night sighting on road.
10	ca 1965, 8 km west of Rock River and north of Bailey on Cronberg Ranch, Carbon County	2	F. Long, rancher; close range daytime observation
11	1975-78, near Pathfinder National Wildlife Refuge, Carbon County	6	J. C. Marshall, ranch predator controller; observed while shooting prairie dogs.
12	1978, July, near Cottonwood Road along U.S. Hwy. 189 between Daniel and Big Piney, Sublette County	1	C. Ball, rancher; observed in Uinta ground squirrel ( <i>Spermophilus armatus</i> ) colony.
13	1978, near Medicine Bow, Carbon County, T22N R77W S31	1	T. M. Campbell, Biota Research & Consulting, Inc.; skull found on prairie dog town.
14	1978-79, between Kemmerer and Evanston, Uinta County; and between Hanna and Medicine Bow, Carbon County	6	S. J. Martin and M. H. Schroeder, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service; skulls found on prairie dog towns (Martin and Schroeder 1979, 1980).
15	1979, 8 km south of Boulder along U.S. Hwy. 187, Sublette County	1	B. Kiesling, Nature Conservancy; observed with ground squirrel in mouth.