

USDA Wildlife Services in Montana Assists with Endangered Black-Footed Ferret Recovery



On September 17, 2014, Wildlife Services Montana State Director John Steuber and wildlife disease biologist Jerry Wiscomb helped to release 20 endangered black-footed ferrets onto the Fort Belknap Indian Community Reservation in North Central Montana.

In preparation for the release, Wildlife Services' biologists spent 6 weeks and over 1,000 man hours applying DeltaDust insecticide to prairie dog burrows at the site to kill fleas that transmit

sylvatic plague. Though great strides have been made to recover endangered black-footed ferrets in the wild, sylvatic plague outbreaks in prairie dogs (the ferret's primary food source) hamper current efforts. Black-footed ferrets and prairie dogs are extremely susceptible to plague.



Once thought to be extinct, black-footed ferrets are making a comeback thanks to a successful captive breeding program, multiple reintroduction sites across the West, and the hard work of many government agencies, non-governmental organizations, Tribes, private landowners, and concerned citizens. Wildlife Services is a member of the [Black-footed Ferret Recovery Implementation Team](#), a multiagency group led by the U.S Fish and Wildlife Service and tasked with the long-term recovery of the ferret. Wildlife Services provides prairie dog and disease management at ferret reintroduction sites across the United States.

For more information on Montana Wildlife Services' activities related to the recovery of black-footed ferrets, please contact Jerry Wiscomb at (406) 657-6464.



Twenty endangered black-footed ferrets were released at Fort Belknap on September 17, 2014. Wildlife Services employees Jerry Wiscomb and John Steuber (left photo) helped Tribal members, the World Wildlife Fund and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service release the animals.