



Once widespread in South Dakota, the swift fox was nearly extirpated from the state in the early 1900s. Recent reintroductions have bolstered the population, but ongoing monitoring and habitat management is necessary for continued recovery.

Photo: AdobeStock

# South Dakota & the Recovering America's Wildlife Act

Western South Dakota's rolling terrain, wide open spaces, and native prairie support diverse grassland wildlife species and a deep ranching culture. Prairie pothole wetlands dot the landscape of eastern South Dakota, and support some of the highest concentrations of breeding waterfowl and other wetland birds in North America. With its unique landscape and rich assortment of wildlife, the opportunity to conserve South Dakota's natural heritage is great. South Dakota residents and visitors enjoy fishing for native northern pike, watching birds, and hunting deer and waterfowl. However, with more than 1/3 of America's wildlife currently at risk of extinction, South Dakota could lose much of its beloved wild features. By providing dedicated funding for state and tribal-led wildlife conservation efforts, the Recovering America's Wildlife Act will help wildlife at risk before they need the "emergency room" measures required by the Endangered Species Act.

## By the numbers:

**104 species**

South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks (SDGFP) has identified 104 species that need conservation assistance, including the burrowing owl, mountain sucker, and regal fritillary butterfly.

**\$15 million**

The Recovering America's Wildlife Act would give SDGFP \$15 million every year to help the 104 species in need through conservation action including habitat restoration, outreach, species reintroductions, research, and more.

**\$500 thousand**

The current source of federal funding in South Dakota for proactive, locally-led wildlife conservation—state and tribal wildlife grants—is inadequate to help the species at risk.

# Recovering America's Wildlife Act

America is in the midst of an unprecedented wildlife crisis. Once abundant populations of fish and wildlife are now facing steep declines because of habitat loss, disease, and other threats. The bipartisan Recovering America's Wildlife Act would dedicate \$1.4 billion annually to state and tribal-led wildlife conservation — helping prevent wildlife from becoming endangered in the first place. Learn more at [www.nwf.org/recoverwildlife](http://www.nwf.org/recoverwildlife)

## South Dakota Conservation in Action

Attaining speeds of over 240 mph while diving, the peregrine falcon holds the record for the fastest animal in the world. However, due to the eggshell-thinning effects of widespread DDT use around 60 years ago, this record-setting bird disappeared from South Dakota in the 1950s, and by the 1970s was near extirpation nationwide. Since then, multiple reintroduction efforts have been attempted, with some success – in 2017 peregrine falcons were found breeding in South Dakota for the first time in 50 years. However, the peregrine falcon is far from complete recovery and is still listed as Endangered in the state. Recovering America's Wildlife Act would help the falcon by funding work to continue population monitoring, educate climbers to make them aware of potential nesting areas, and undertake further reintroduction efforts.

*Peregrine Falcon*



Roy W. Lowe/USFWS

*River Otter*



Dmitry Azovtsev

Once considered common on many rivers of the northern Great Plains, the North American river otter experienced dramatic declines in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries due to trapping and loss of habitat. Currently listed as Threatened in South Dakota, the river otter continues to struggle with habitat loss, reduced prey populations, and vehicle collisions. In 2012, SDGFP created a river otter management plan to help address these threats. The Recovering America's Wildlife Act would fund critical conservation action for the river otter outlined in that plan along with information sharing to reduce incidental mortality from beaver traps, and support broader population monitoring to track river otter expansion.

## Other South Dakota Species of Greatest Conservation Need



**Townsend's  
Big-Eared Bat**



**Ornate Box Turtle**



**Blue Sucker**



**Greater Prairie-Chicken**

Photos: Ann Froschauer/USFWS; USFWS; Spencer Neuharth/USFWS; Greg Kramos/USFWS



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