
Kit Fox

Vulpes macrotis

Mammalia — Carnivora — Canidae

CONSERVATION STATUS / CLASSIFICATION

Rangewide: Apparently secure (G4)
Statewide: Critically imperiled (S1)
ESA: No status
USFS: Region 1: No status; Region 4: No status
BLM: Peripheral (Type 4)
IDFG: Protected nongame

BASIS FOR INCLUSION

Lack of essential information pertaining to status in Idaho.

TAXONOMY

Some authorities consider the taxon *macrotis* to be a subspecies of the swift fox, *Vulpes velox*.

DISTRIBUTION AND ABUNDANCE

The kit fox occurs in arid scrub habitats of the Intermountain West. Most records of the species in Idaho are from areas south of the Snake River, particularly in the southwest part of the state, but scattered records suggest that populations may occur well to the north.

POPULATION TREND

Population trend is unknown.

HABITAT AND ECOLOGY

Kit foxes are closely associated with desert shrub and shrubsteppe habitats. Shadscale, black greasewood, and big sagebrush are often dominant plants in occupied habitat (McGrew 1979, Verts and Carraway 1998). Occupied sites are typically arid with limited availability of surface water. Prey consists of small mammals, birds, reptiles, and insects.

ISSUES

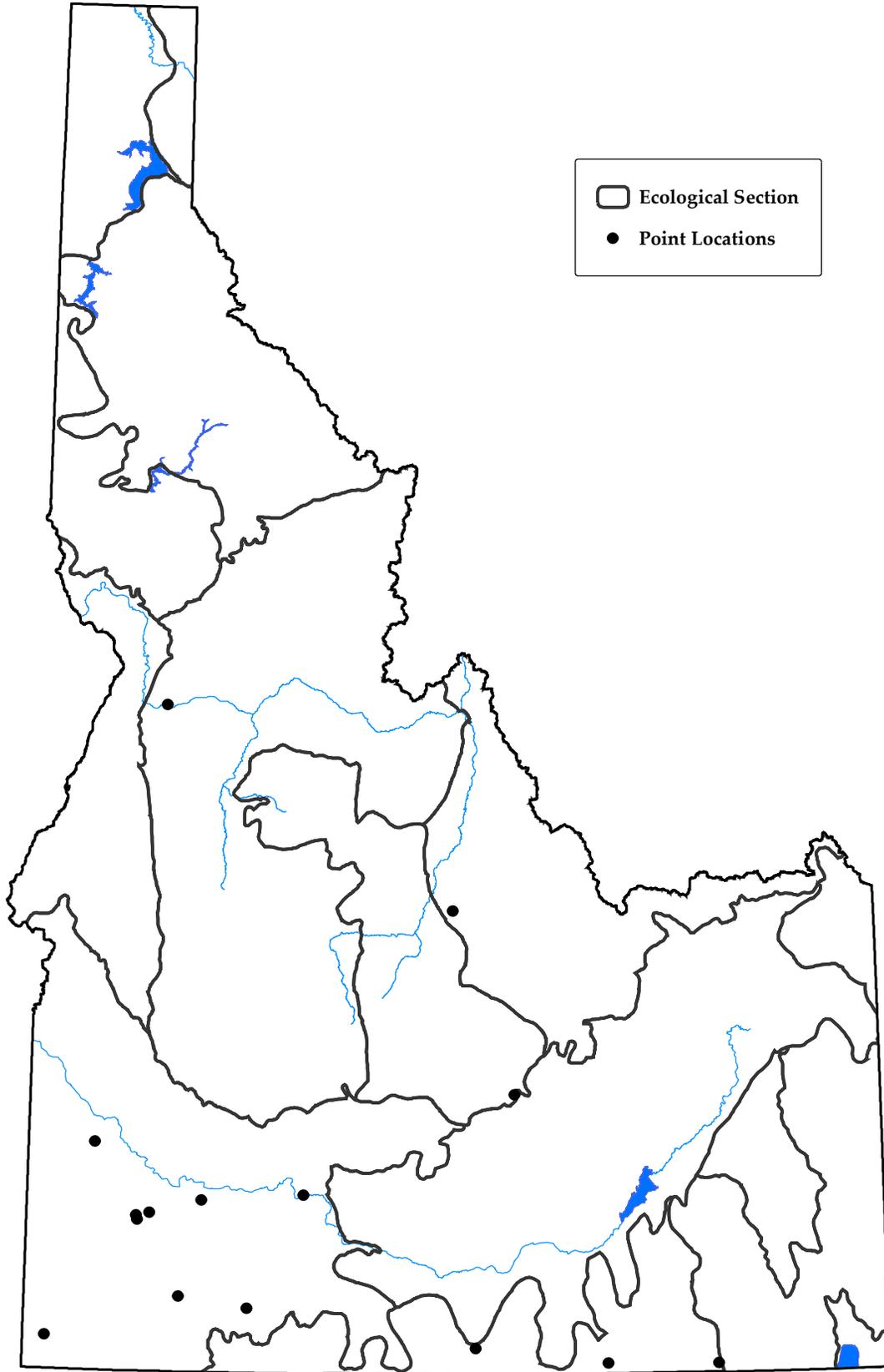
Human-caused mortality is the primary threat to this species. Vehicle-caused mortality can be high, and indiscriminate shooting of wild canids may occur in some areas. Control measures, such as trapping and poisoning, intended for coyotes and other predators may be especially harmful to the kit fox because this species tends to be inquisitive and unwary. The reduction of rodent and rabbit populations may be a threat where habitat is degraded by invasive weeds and disturbance from various land uses.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

Surveys and monitoring efforts are needed to determine the status and distribution of populations. Regulation of predator control measures, particularly indiscriminate methods, is needed in areas where this species occurs. Protection and restoration efforts are needed throughout xeric shrublands to benefit this and other species dependent on this habitat.

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Map created on September 21, 2005
and prepared by Idaho Conservation Data Center.
Sources: Point data are from Idaho Conservation Data Center,
Idaho Department of Fish and Game (2005).

