

**(S.D.)-Wildlife Biologist Says Ferrets Could Be Remnants Of Long-Lost Colony**

By: Roxie Graham-Marski Posted at: 12/27/2012 09:27 AM

**SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) -** A wildlife biologist says some endangered black-footed ferrets recently spotted in South Dakota could be remnants of a long-lost colony.

Officials working with the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe photographed an adult ferret and two juveniles during a series of nighttime surveys in prairie dog towns near Mobridge. The ferrets were first spotted Halloween night.

Barry Betts, biologist for the tribe, says he believes it's the first sighting of a wild black-footed ferret since a colony was discovered in Wyoming three decades ago.

However, Pete Gober, coordinator of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's national ferret recovery program, says it's unlikely that the animals are part of a wild colony.

Gober says the ferrets likely migrated from one of six reintroduction sites in South Dakota.