

## *Vormela peregusna*, Marbled Polecat

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## Taxonomy

Kingdom	Phylum	Class	Order	Family
Animalia	Chordata	Mammalia	Carnivora	Mustelidae

**Taxon Name:** *Vormela peregusna* (Güldenstädt, 1770)

**Synonym(s):**

- *Mustela peregusna* Güldenstädt, 1770

**Regional Assessments:**

- [Mediterranean](#)
- [Europe](#)

**Common Name(s):**

- English: Marbled Polecat, European Marbled Polecat
- French: Putois Marbré
- Spanish: Turón Búlgaro

**Taxonomic Notes:**

Marbled Polecat infra-specific taxonomy is not clear and further work on this is required (most of the work so far has been done on pelts).

## Assessment Information

**Red List Category & Criteria:** Vulnerable A2c [ver 3.1](#)

**Year Published:** 2016

**Date Assessed:** March 3, 2015

**Justification:**

Marbled Polecat is listed as Vulnerable under Criterion A2c (population reduction over the last 10 years through habitat loss). It seems reasonable to infer at least a 30% reduction in the population in the last ten years (slightly longer than three generations; Pacifici *et al.* 2013) because of the heavy loss of steppe habitat (especially in Europe and China). This reduction is likely to continue into the future, as suggested by climate change models and land-use change, but it is difficult to predict if it would be at the same rate.

**Previously Published Red List Assessments**

2008 – Vulnerable (VU) – <http://dx.doi.org/10.2305/IUCN.UK.2008.RLTS.T29680A9525379.en>

1996 – Lower Risk/least concern (LR/lc)

## Geographic Range

**Range Description:**

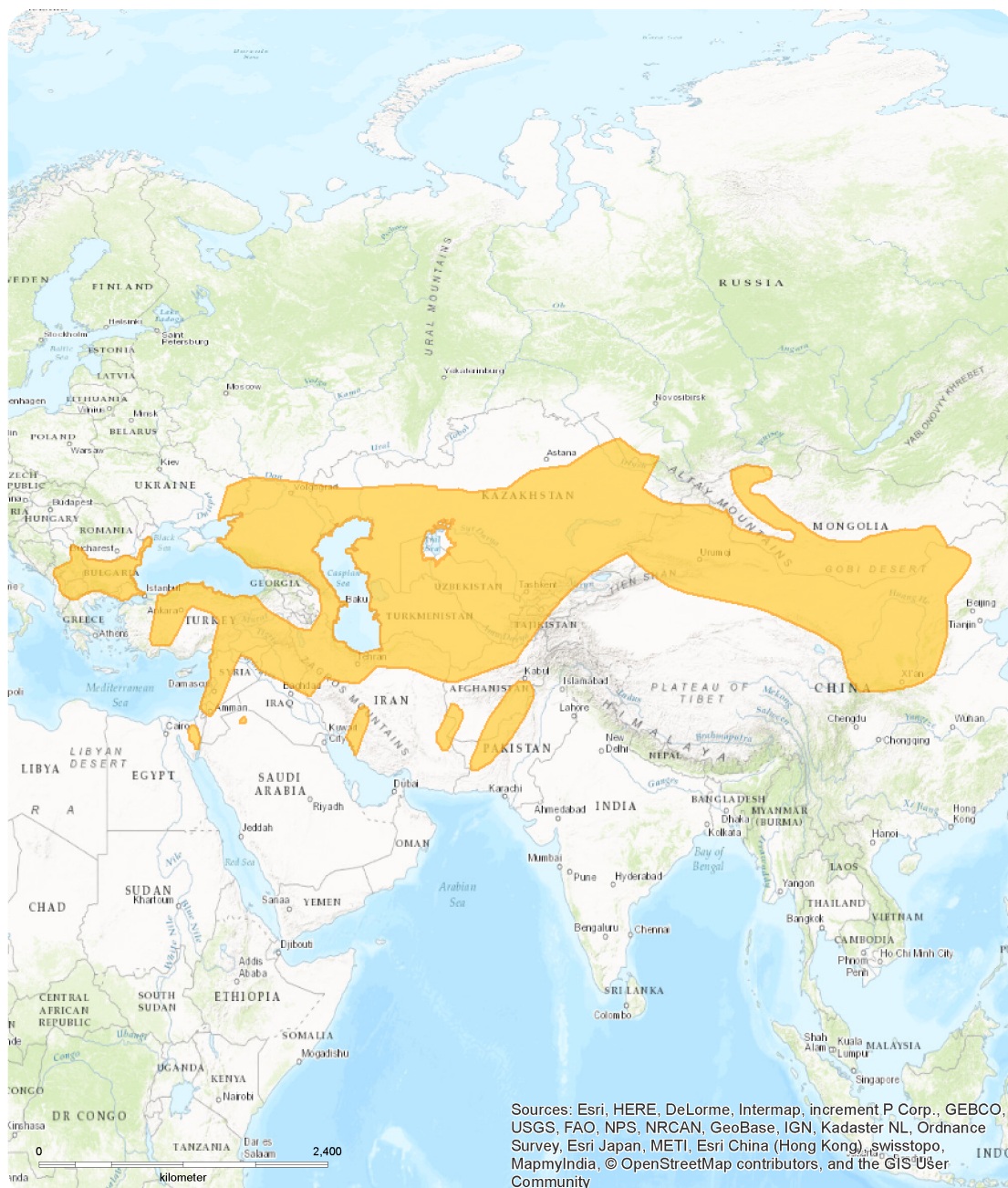
Marbled Polecat occurs from south-east Europe through Asia Minor, the Middle East, the Caucasus, and Central Asia, to northern China and Mongolia. In Europe, it is found in Serbia and Montenegro, Macedonia, Greece, Romania, Bulgaria, Turkish Thrace, southern parts of Ukraine (but it has disappeared from most of the Ukraine, persisting only in the east), the south of the Russian Federation and the northern Caucasus (in the steppe areas, not the mountains). It is widespread in the Middle East, having been recorded from Israel/Palestine, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, northern Iraq and northern Saudi Arabia (Ellerman and Morrison-Scott 1951, Harrison 1968, Nader 1991, Werner 2012). In Israel its southern range border is retreating northward (Werner 2012). Two localities in the northern part of the Sinai Peninsula (south-east of Bir El Abd and just north of Gabal El Maghara) constituted the first records from Egypt (Saleh and Basuony 1998). In China it has been recorded from the provinces of Nei Mongol, Shaanxi, Shanxi, Gansu, Ningxia, Qinghai and Xinjiang (Wang 2003). In Mongolia it occurs in the west, south and, locally, centre (Dulamtseren *et al.* 2009). It occurs from sea level to 2,000 m, and up to 3,000 m in the Tien Shan Mountains.

**Country Occurrence:**

**Native:** Afghanistan; Armenia (Armenia); Azerbaijan; Bulgaria; China; Egypt (Sinai); Georgia; Greece; Iran, Islamic Republic of; Iraq; Israel; Kazakhstan; Lebanon; Macedonia, the former Yugoslav Republic of; Mongolia; Montenegro; Pakistan; Romania; Russian Federation; Serbia (Serbia); Syrian Arab Republic; Turkey; Turkmenistan; Ukraine; Uzbekistan

# Distribution Map

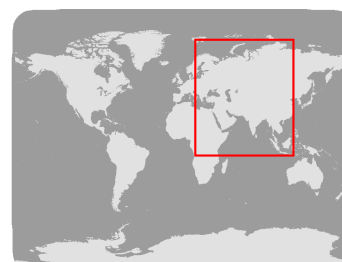
*Vormela peregusna*



Range

Extant (resident)

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Conservation of Nature)



The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply any official endorsement, acceptance or opinion by IUCN.



## Population

Marbled Polecat is rare throughout much of its range, apparently naturally so. It is classed as 'Rare' in the Russian Federation. Its northern range border is receding in the Balkans, Ukraine, and European Russia, as is its southern border in Israel (Werner 2012). It has declined substantially in Europe in line with the loss of steppe habitats. Declines, even extirpation, are also suspected in much of the eastern part of its range (Sadikov 1983, Shagdarsuren and Erdenejav 1988, Anonymous 1991, Shiirevdamba 1997, Rozhnov 2001, Putintsev *et al.* 2002, Clark *et al.* 2006). It is believed to be less rare in central Asia than elsewhere, but even so, it is not common there. It was perhaps common in northern Sinai, Egypt, being well known to the local Bedouins (Saleh and Basuony 1998), but the most recent record from Sinai traced by Basuony *et al.* (2010) was from 1996 and they then considered it to be "very rare" in Egypt. The largest population in the Middle East is reported to be in Israel (M. Stubbe pers. comm. 2006).

**Current Population Trend:** Decreasing

## Habitat and Ecology (see Appendix for additional information)

This species inhabits desert, semi-desert and steppe habitats, but, at least in Israel, also cultivated landscapes (Werner 2012). It is a specialised predator, feeding mainly on desert and steppe rodents such as gerbils, ground squirrels and birds. It was recorded from a sparsely vegetated, sandy area southeast of Bir El Abd, northern Sinai, while another was recorded from a sandy area just north of Gabal El Maghara (Saleh and Basuony 1998). It is the most fossorial of all weasels.

**Systems:** Terrestrial

## Use and Trade

Hunting is perhaps a significant cause of decline in at least Israel (Werner 2012) but is apparently unusual (or perhaps simply undocumented?) elsewhere in the species's range.

## Threats (see Appendix for additional information)

The major threat to Marbled Polecat is the loss of natural steppe and desert habitats. Steppe habitats are declining in Europe through conversion to cultivated farmland. Secondary poisoning by rodenticides might also be a threat, as are likely to be population declines in key prey species (a number of steppe rodent species are declining in Europe). In China, desertification is the major threat to the species. Hunting is perhaps a significant cause of decline in at least Israel (Werner 2012).

## Conservation Actions (see Appendix for additional information)

Marbled Polecat is strictly protected under Appendix II of the Bern Convention. Hunting for this species is prohibited in most countries across its range. It occurs in a number of protected areas across its range, but many may be too small to conserve this species effectively. There is an urgent need to protect the remaining steppe habitat of this species. It is a flagship species for the steppe. An EEP programme has been launched by European zoos for captive management. China's Red List notes the species as Vulnerable. It is listed as threatened in Uzbekistan (Sadikov 1983), Kazakhstan (Anonymous 1991), Russia (Rozhnov 2001) and Mongolia (Shagdarsuren and Erdenejav 1988, Shiirevdamba 1997, Clark *et al.* 2006). The intraspecific taxonomy is unclear and therefore it is unclear if the whole species can be regarded as one conservation management unit.

## Credits

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## Appendix

### Habitats

(<http://www.iucnredlist.org/technical-documents/classification-schemes>)

Habitat	Season	Suitability	Major Importance?
3. Shrubland -> 3.4. Shrubland - Temperate	-	Suitable	-
4. Grassland -> 4.4. Grassland - Temperate	-	Suitable	-
0. Root -> 6. Rocky areas (eg. inland cliffs, mountain peaks)	-	Suitable	-
8. Desert -> 8.2. Desert - Temperate	-	Suitable	-
8. Desert -> 8.3. Desert - Cold	-	Suitable	-
14. Artificial/Terrestrial -> 14.1. Artificial/Terrestrial - Arable Land	-	Marginal	-

### Threats

(<http://www.iucnredlist.org/technical-documents/classification-schemes>)

Threat	Timing	Scope	Severity	Impact Score
2. Agriculture & aquaculture -> 2.1. Annual & perennial non-timber crops -> 2.1.3. Agro-industry farming	Ongoing	Majority (50-90%)	Rapid declines	Medium impact: 7
	Stresses:	1. Ecosystem stresses -> 1.1. Ecosystem conversion 1. Ecosystem stresses -> 1.2. Ecosystem degradation		
4. Transportation & service corridors -> 4.1. Roads & railroads	Ongoing	Minority (50%)	Negligible declines	Low impact: 4
	Stresses:	1. Ecosystem stresses -> 1.1. Ecosystem conversion		
5. Biological resource use -> 5.1. Hunting & trapping terrestrial animals -> 5.1.1. Intentional use (species is the target)	Ongoing	Minority (50%)	Negligible declines	Low impact: 4
	Stresses:	2. Species Stresses -> 2.1. Species mortality		
7. Natural system modifications -> 7.3. Other ecosystem modifications	Ongoing	Minority (50%)	Slow, significant declines	Low impact: 5
	Stresses:	1. Ecosystem stresses -> 1.1. Ecosystem conversion		

### Conservation Actions in Place

(<http://www.iucnredlist.org/technical-documents/classification-schemes>)

Conservation Actions in Place
In-Place Research, Monitoring and Planning
Action Recovery plan: No
Systematic monitoring scheme: No

<b>Conservation Actions in Place</b>
In-Place Land/Water Protection and Management
Occur in at least one PA: Yes
Area based regional management plan: No
In-Place Species Management
Harvest management plan: No
Successfully reintroduced or introduced benignly: No
Subject to ex-situ conservation: Yes
In-Place Education
Subject to recent education and awareness programmes: Unknown
Included in international legislation: Yes
Subject to any international management/trade controls: No

## Conservation Actions Needed

(<http://www.iucnredlist.org/technical-documents/classification-schemes>)

<b>Conservation Actions Needed</b>
1. Land/water protection -> 1.1. Site/area protection
2. Land/water management -> 2.1. Site/area management
2. Land/water management -> 2.3. Habitat & natural process restoration

## Research Needed

(<http://www.iucnredlist.org/technical-documents/classification-schemes>)

<b>Research Needed</b>
1. Research -> 1.1. Taxonomy
1. Research -> 1.2. Population size, distribution & trends
1. Research -> 1.5. Threats
1. Research -> 1.6. Actions
3. Monitoring -> 3.1. Population trends

## Additional Data Fields

<b>Distribution</b>
Continuing decline in area of occupancy (AOO): Yes

<b>Distribution</b>
Extreme fluctuations in area of occupancy (AOO): Unknown
Estimated extent of occurrence (EOO) (km <sup>2</sup> ): >20,000
Continuing decline in extent of occurrence (EOO): Yes
Extreme fluctuations in extent of occurrence (EOO): No
Continuing decline in number of locations: Yes
Extreme fluctuations in the number of locations: Unknown
Lower elevation limit (m): 0
Upper elevation limit (m): 3000
<b>Population</b>
Continuing decline of mature individuals: Yes
Extreme fluctuations: Unknown
Population severely fragmented: Unknown
Continuing decline in subpopulations: Yes
Extreme fluctuations in subpopulations: Unknown
All individuals in one subpopulation: No
<b>Habitats and Ecology</b>
Continuing decline in area, extent and/or quality of habitat: Yes
Generation Length (years): 3.1
Movement patterns: Not a Migrant

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