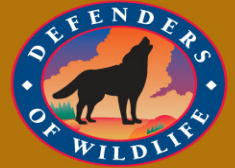


Wildlife Volunteer Corps

Engaging Volunteers in Wildlife Conservation



Defenders of Wildlife launched the **Wildlife Volunteer Corps**, a pilot program that connects our members and activists with unique volunteer opportunities with biologists and wildlife managers to **protect, monitor and recover imperiled wildlife and the habitats and ecosystems they need to survive.**

Through this program, participants are offered the chance to support and even contribute to **the science of protecting imperiled species.** For example, in 2006, Defenders' volunteers joined biologists in an overnight spotlight survey to count and tag black-footed ferrets that had been released in the wild as part of their recovery plan. Not only did the information our volunteers collected confirm that these ferrets were surviving, but it established that some of them were even reproducing in the wild! And helping the biologists track and tag these ferrets allowed the volunteers to learn about ferret biology and behavior along the way.



Defenders volunteer restoring habitat for the New England Cottontail in Maine.

The Wildlife Volunteer Corps has worked with **government agencies, biologists, schools and other conservation organizations** to host many successful projects across the country. Our volunteers have a great time, meet like-minded folks in the area and learn first hand about species and habitat restoration.

As Kristina Vagos, the project coordinator for the New England Cottontail project, stated, ***“Without the help from volunteers, we wouldn't have been able to restore as much habitat as we have for the New England cottontail. One person can only do so much. However, a group of dedicated individuals can really make a significant impact. It is this camaraderie, idealism and spirit that really make a project.”***



Defenders' staff releasing a black-footed ferret during a nighttime spotlighting survey.

Past projects include:

- Identifying snowy plover habitat throughout the continental U.S.
- Performing night searches for black-footed ferrets in Utah and Colorado.
- Restoring native plant life to sections of the Everglades in Florida.
- Planting native trees and shrubs for New England Cottontail habitat in Maine.
- Surveying and monitoring the imperiled Idaho ground squirrel.
- Removing invasive plants in migratory bird habitat in Virginia.
- Building panther-proof fences to protect pets and livestock in Florida

Defenders will continue to identify opportunities for volunteers to take real on-the-ground action to help conserve imperiled wildlife. For more information or to suggest a volunteer project, contact wvc@defenders.org or visit www.defenders.org/wildlifevolunteercorps