



## GUNNISON'S PRAIRIE DOG

The Gunnison's prairie dog resembles a ground squirrel in general appearance but doesn't have any patterns on its back. The Gunnison's prairie dog has a yellowish buff to cinnamon-colored body and has a white-tipped tail. Their weight varies from one to three pounds, with males being heavier than females. They eat mainly grasses, but forbs, sedges and rushes, big sagebrush, and rabbitbrush are also part of their diet. In the fall, before hibernation, the Gunnison's prairie dog will also eat grass seeds to store energy. Territory of Gunnison's prairie dog includes southeastern Utah, south-central to southwestern Colorado, central to northeastern Arizona, and west-central, north-central, and central New Mexico. However, Gunnison's prairie dog abundance in New Mexico has declined significantly due to drought, habitat loss, energy development, sylvatic plague, and human activity. NMDGF biologists have listed the Gunnison's prairie dog as a species of greatest conservation need, and surveys are conducted each year to assess the status and health of the population.