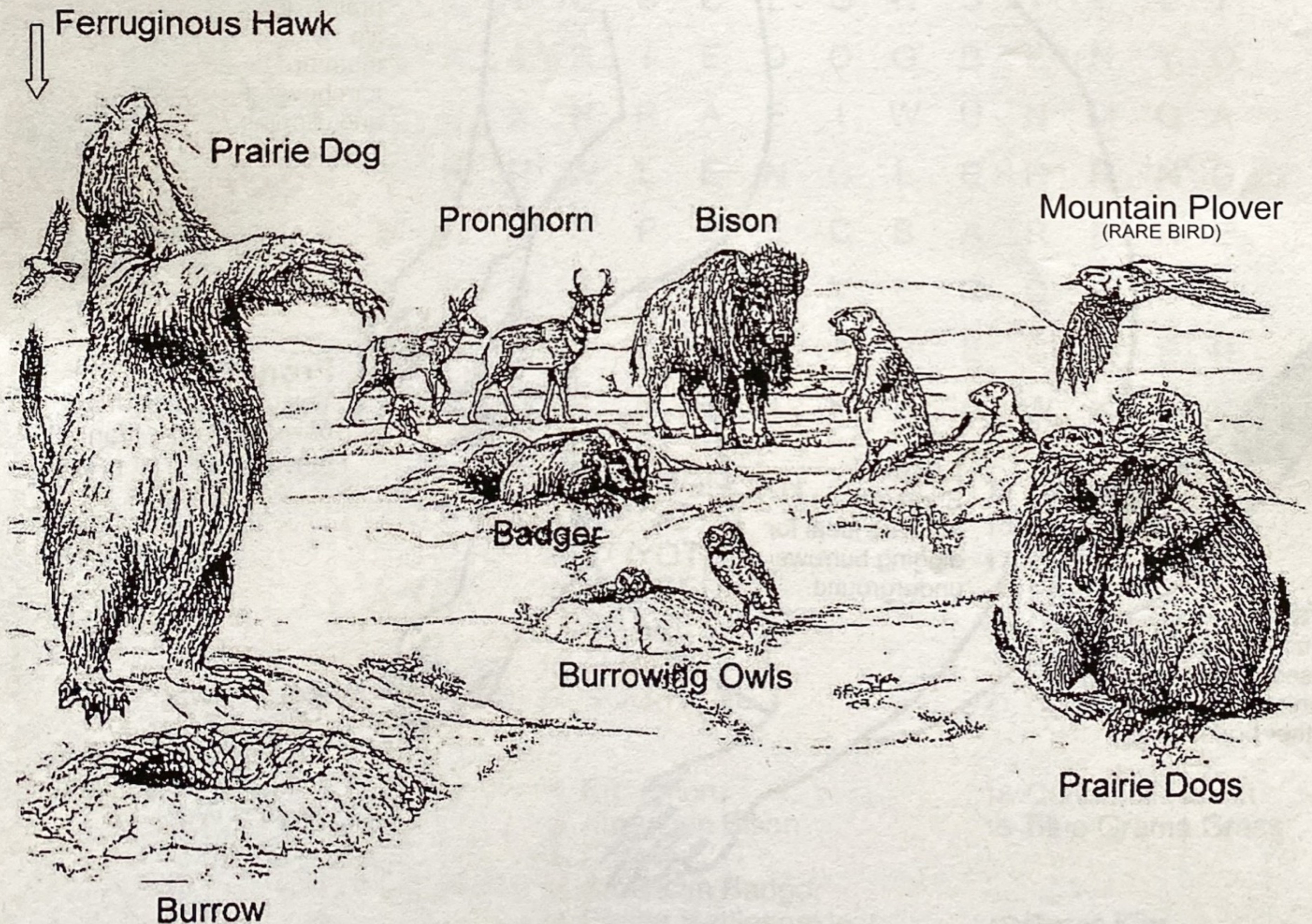


Our Friends on the Prairie

Coloring & Activity Book

Prairie Dog Ecosystem



100% Post-Consumer Recycled Paper
REDUCE - REUSE - RECYCLE - RESTORE
EVERY DAY IS EARTH DAY!



This is the Black-Tailed Prairie Dog!

Eyes

A prairie dog has good eyesight to scan for predators. Their eyes are set high on the sides of its head for a wider range of vision.

Whiskers

Sensitive whiskers allow the prairie dog to feel its way through its dark burrow tunnels.

Ears

Their ears are smaller than tree squirrels so they do not get in the way when the animal is underground.

Nose

Prairie dogs build and pack their burrow mounds with their noses. Their sense of smell is used in the dark burrow tunnels.

"...prairie dogs have the most complex natural animal language... decoded so far..."

- Con Slobodchikoff, Ph.D.

Front Teeth

They keep growing throughout the prairie dog's life. Their teeth are ideal for chewing and clipping vegetation.

Legs

Short, strong legs are ideal for digging burrows underground.

Front Paws

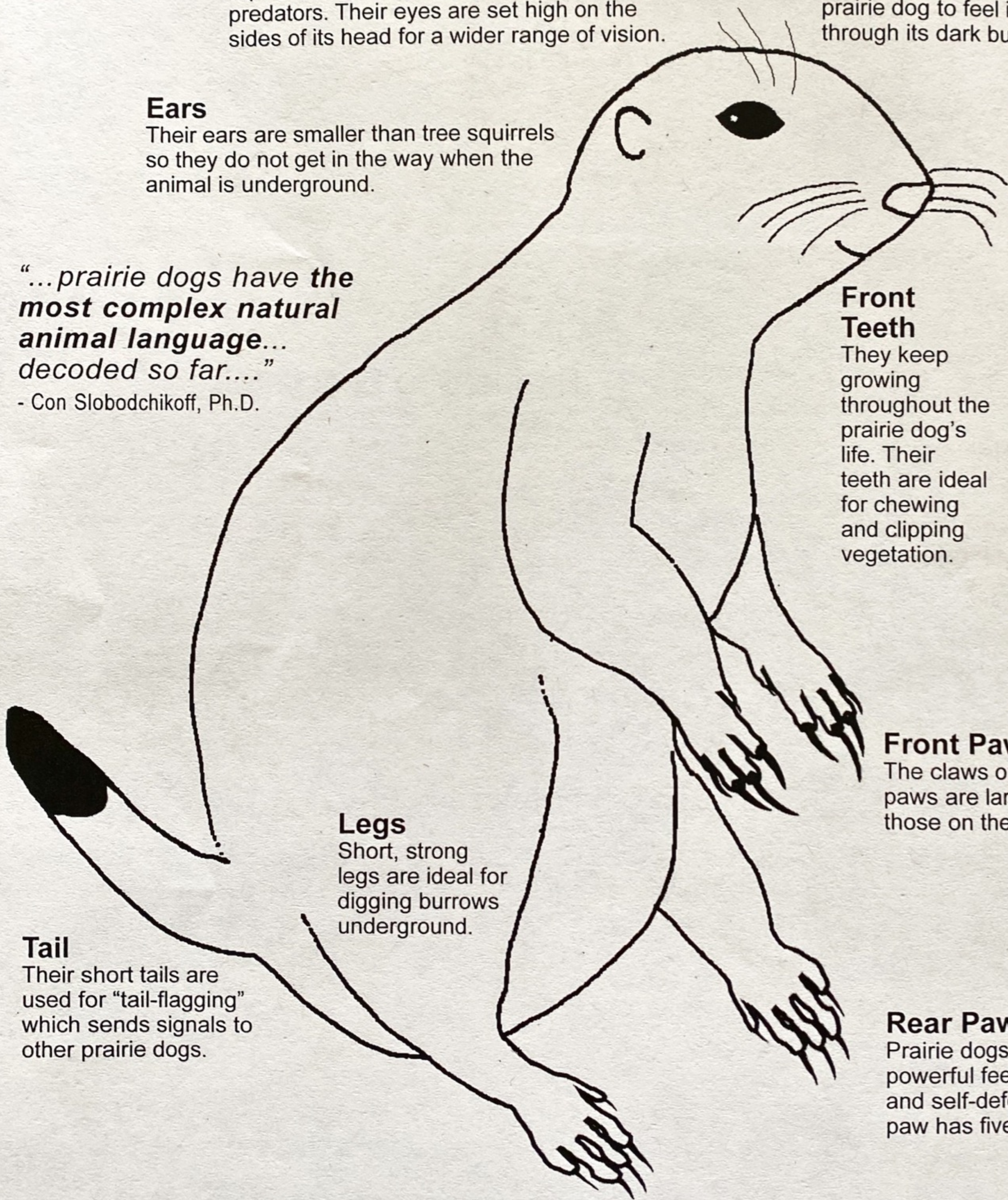
The claws on the front paws are larger than those on the rear paws.

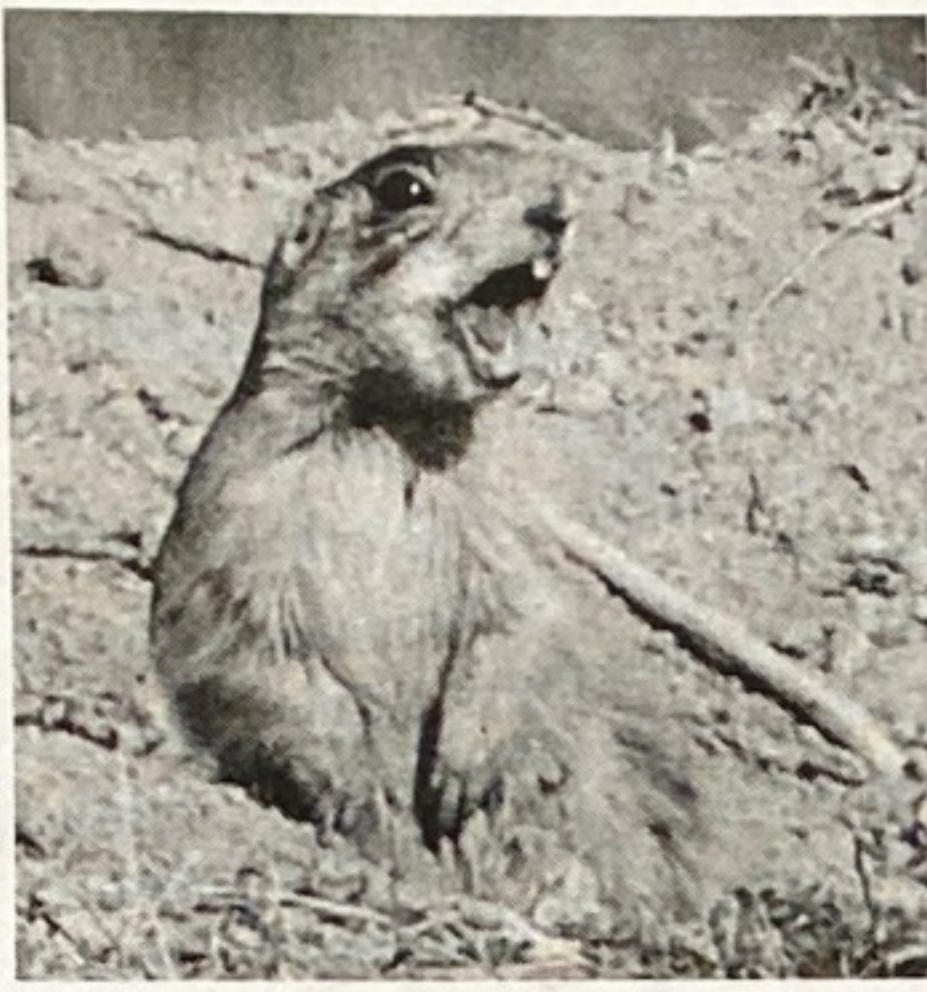
Tail

Their short tails are used for "tail-flagging" which sends signals to other prairie dogs.

Rear Paws

Prairie dogs have powerful feet for digging and self-defense. Each paw has five claws.





Prairie Words



O B C O Y O T E O G B A O Y I
 E O X H P W K N A T U R E X B
 B G W U R Q F M B O R Q S F T
 I V W L O Z A E I O R U B O P
 S A M P N W U G R B O N A X N
 O Q X O G U T S R R W O D Y L
 N J U S H F F D C N E A G L E
 D Z I I O S C L G H S T E L T
 P R A I R I E D O G B E R Y O
 U A G X N R A E I W U N M Q A
 W B R R W L E N G L E R R N D
 K B A H G F E L C B A R P R E
 K I S S J P L O V E R Q R S T
 X T S N A K E Z A U E S E E D
 T Q M O Z F U I H H A W K B R

- 1 PRAIRIE DOG
- 2 FERRET
- 3 PLOVER
- 4 FOX
- 5 OWL
- 6 HAWK
- 7 EAGLE

- 8 PRONGHORN
- 9 BISON
- 10 COYOTE
- 11 BADGER
- 12 SNAKE
- 13 TOAD
- 14 SQUIRREL

- 15 RABBIT
- 16 GRASS
- 17 SEED
- 18 FLOWER
- 19 BURROW
- 20 NATURE
- 21 KISS

FULL NAMES

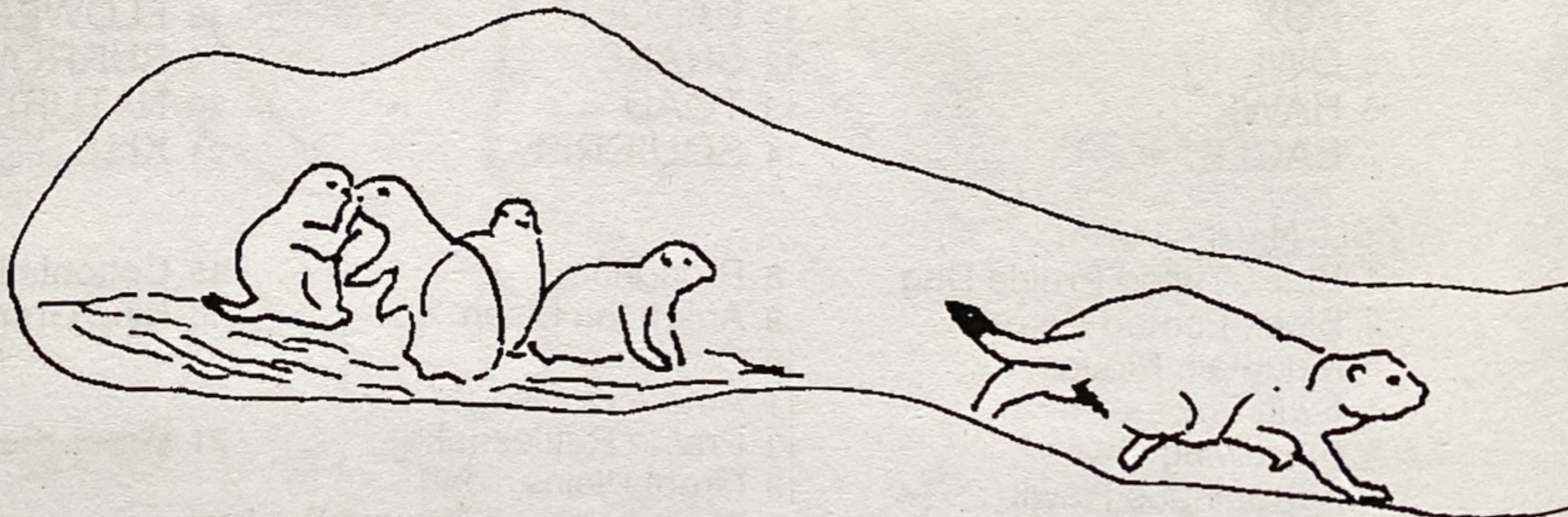
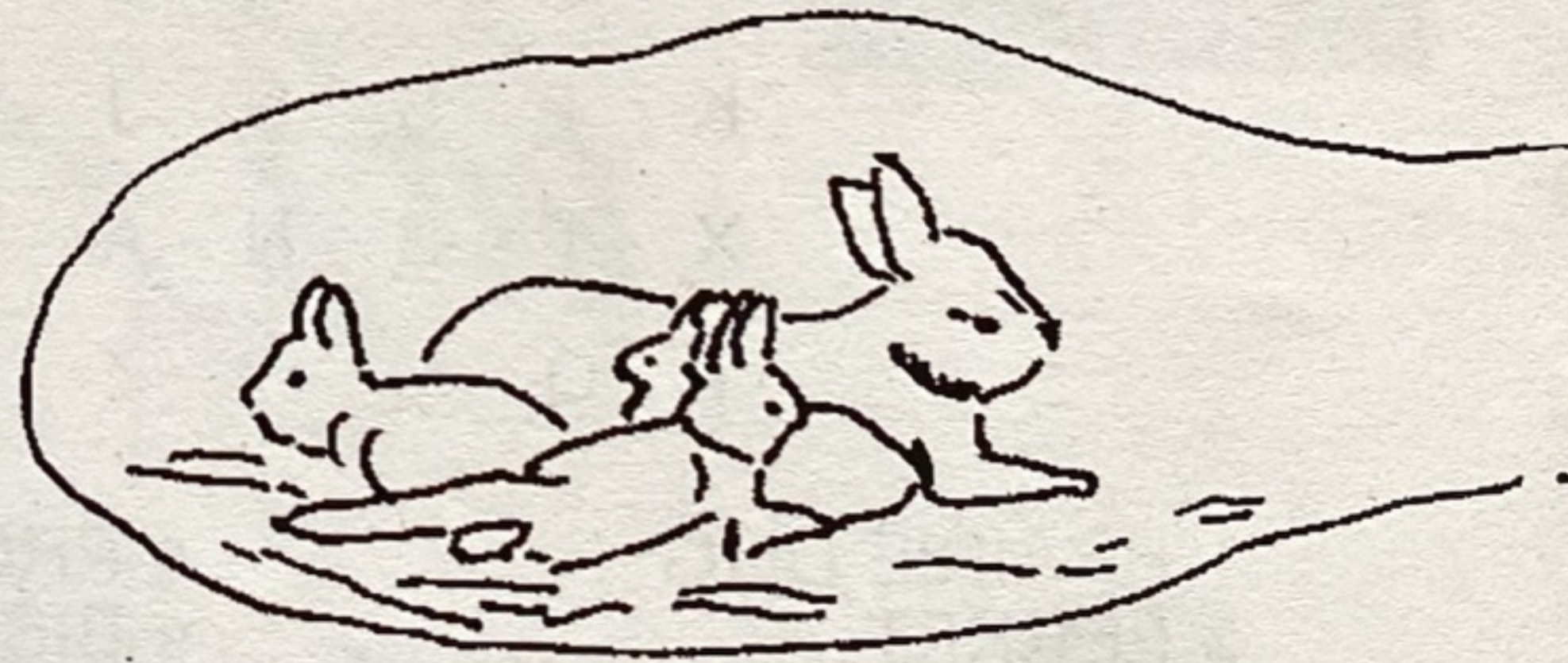
- | | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------|
| 1 Black-Tailed Prairie Dog | 8 Pronghorn | 15 Cottontail Rabbit |
| 2 Black-Footed Ferret | 9 American Bison | 16 Blue Grama Grass |
| 3 Mountain Plover | 10 Coyote | |
| 4 Swift Fox | 11 American Badger | |
| 5 Burrowing Owl | 12 Prairie Rattlesnake | 21 Greet-Kiss |
| 6 Ferruginous Hawk | 13 Great Plains Toad | |
| 7 Golden Eagle & Bald Eagle | 14 Thirteen-Lined Ground Squirrel | |

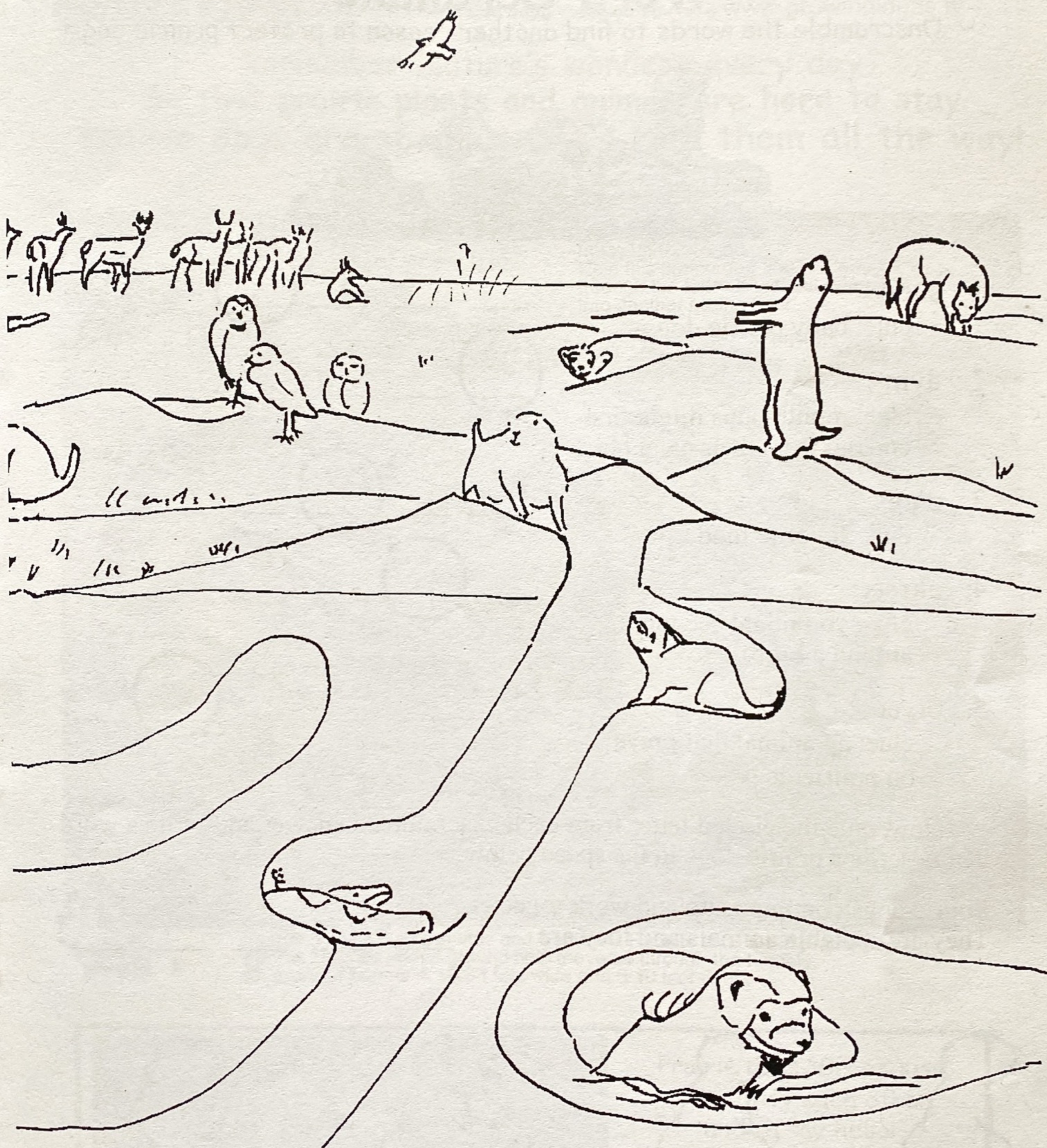
The Prairie Ecosystem



Prairie dogs are the **KEYSTONE SPECIES** of prairie ecosystems.

They and their burrows support over 200 other animals.





This is the way the prairie in Colorado may have looked 150 years ago. All of these animals are native animals, which means they have been here for thousands of years.

How many animals can you name?

Word Scramble

~ Unscramble the words to find another reason to protect prairie dogs!



1. supp

clue: baby prairie dogs

____ _ _

2. aym

clue: month pups might first emerge from their natal burrow

 ____ _

3. sargs

clue: favorite food

____ _ ____ _

4. akrcts

clue: you might see these around a burrow

____ ____ _

5. otyceo

clue: an animal that preys on prairie dogs

____ _ ____ ____

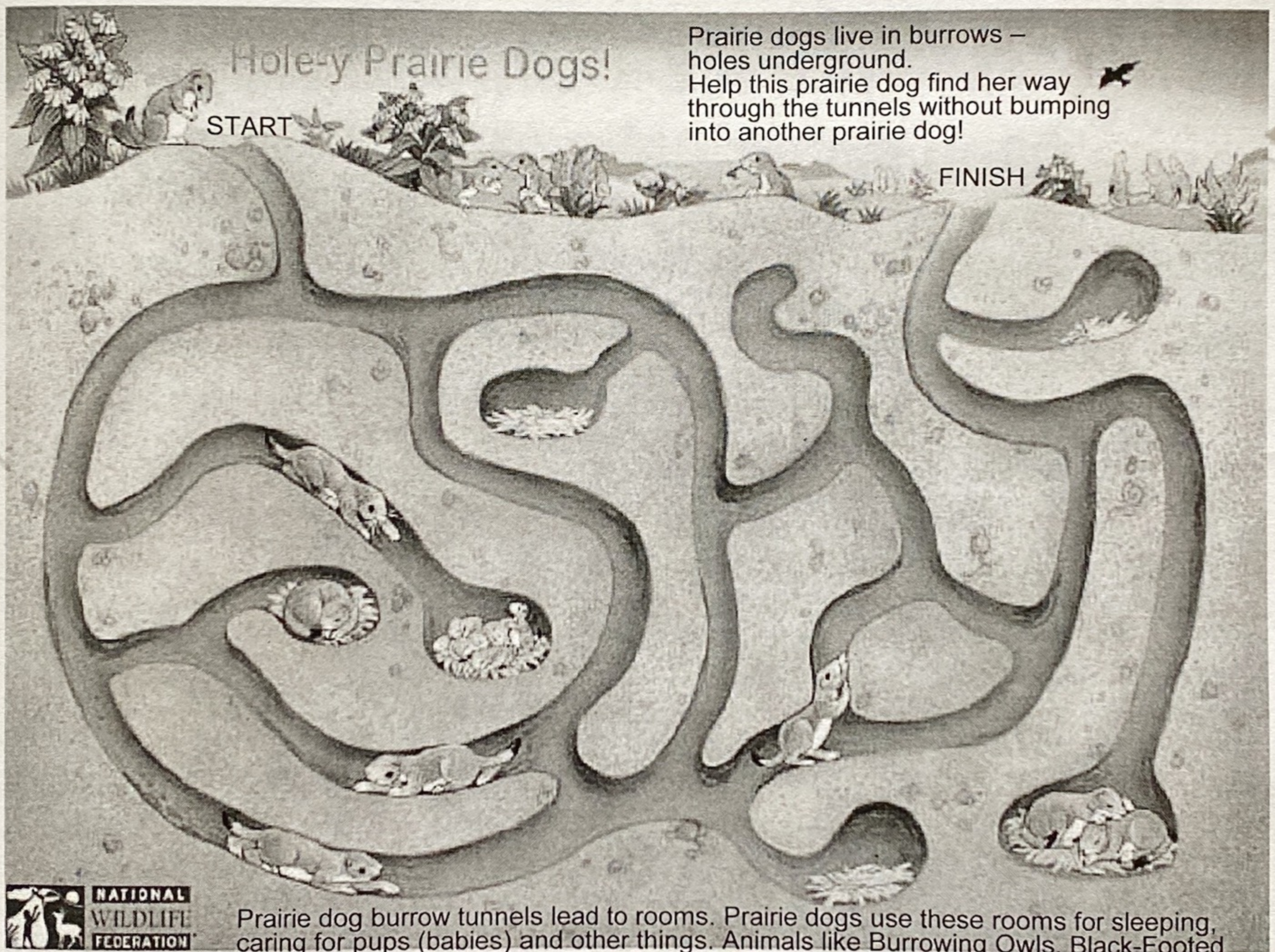
Now, take the circled letter from each unscrambled answer and write a word that describes prairie dogs in the space below.

Prairie dogs communicate and work together. They are sociable animals and they are

____ _ !
1 2 3 4 5



Remember Nature's wonders every day
So that prairie plants and animals are here to stay
Prairie dogs are special - let's help them all the way!

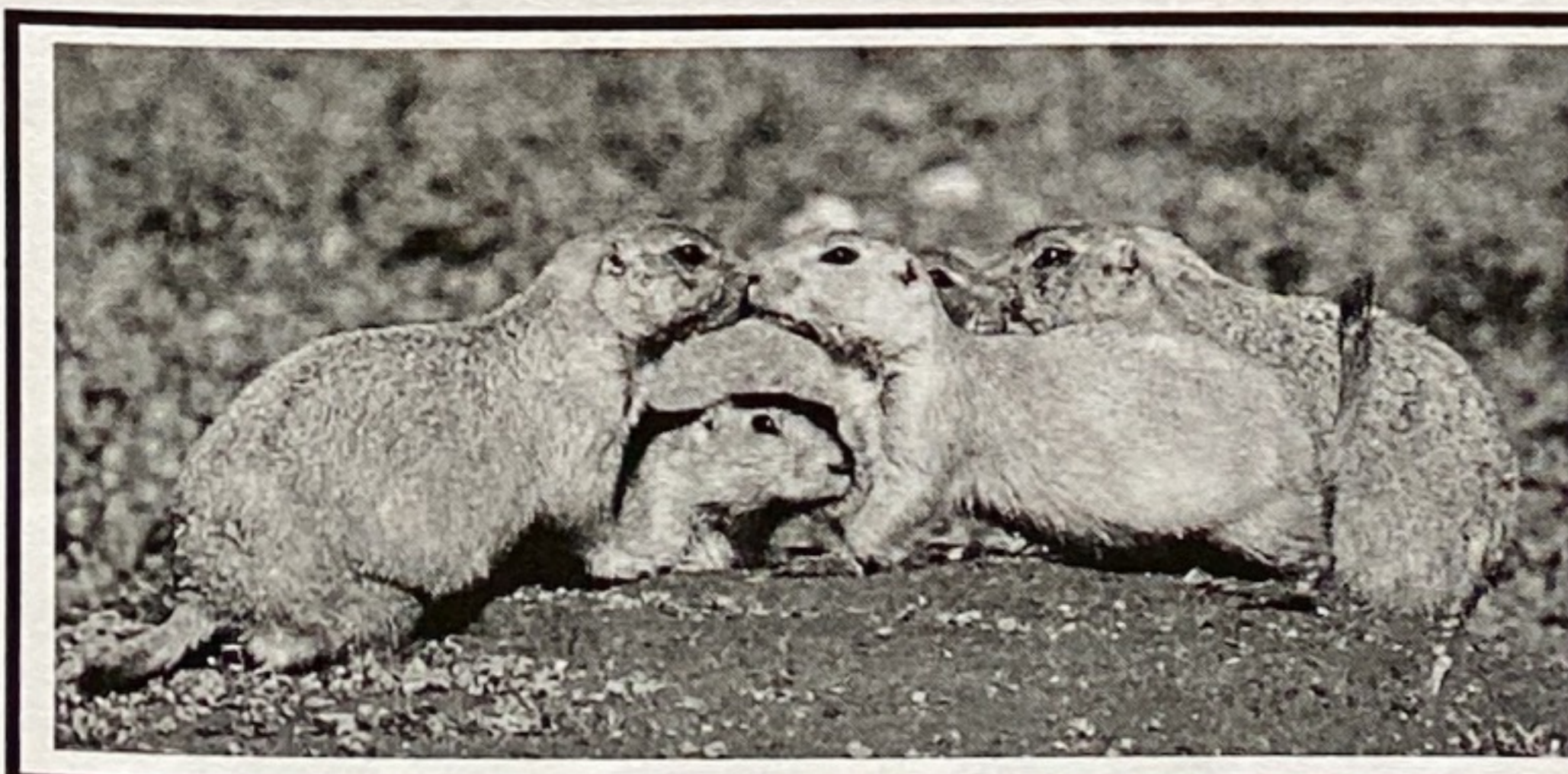


Prairie dogs live in burrows – holes underground. Help this prairie dog find her way through the tunnels without bumping into another prairie dog!



Your Big Backyard

Prairie dog burrow tunnels lead to rooms. Prairie dogs use these rooms for sleeping, caring for pups (babies) and other things. Animals like Burrowing Owls, Black-Footed Ferrets, Prairie Rattlesnakes and Cottontail Rabbits also live in prairie dog burrows. Burrow mounds above ground help move air through the tunnels. An average burrow is 16-33 feet wide and 6-10 feet deep.



Prairie dogs "Greet-Kiss" to identify each other and to say hello!

They come together and touch tongues.

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TAKE ACTION for PRAIRIE DOGS!

Help to make the world a better place – Experience the Prairie!

- Plan a field trip to a colony. Be sure to take binoculars.
- Find a colony and “adopt” it. Keep an eye on it, and take notes. Try to visit it every couple days and let an adult who cares know if you see anything wrong.
- At your adopted prairie dog colony, pick up trash or litter. Please wear gloves, and be careful.
- Start a list of other wildlife you see at “your” colony! Be sure to have some field guides and binoculars for this.

LEARN more and SHARE what you know!

- Learn more by checking out The Prairie Dog Coalition website at www.prairiedogcoalition.org.
- Learn from Our Friends on the Prairie coloring and activity book and watch and learn from prairie dog videos at www.growingideas.tv and the **prairiedogchatter** channel on YouTube.
- Share your prairie dog bookmarks with a friend and teach others about the prairie ecosystem. Use the materials you have and visit other classrooms and share your knowledge!
- Go to this fun, interactive site to actually build a prairie:
www.bellmuseum.org/distancelearning/prairie/build/
- Find a native plant nursery or company and order some prairie grass seed and try to grow it. Try these companies:
 - Arkansas Valley Seed Solutions 4625 Colorado Blvd, Denver, CO 80216 (877) 957-3337
www.avseeds.com
 - www.westernnativeseed.com/catreq.html
- Create a diorama of the prairie ecosystem. Include several species of plants and animals.
- Do a web search of prairie sites and try to learn 5 new things. Look up some prairie dog scientists. Here are some names you could start with: John Hoogland, Con Slobodchikoff, Richard Reading and Brian Miller.

