Uterine prolapse is a condition where the uterus falls down or slips out of place, invariably after or within several hours of parturition, when the cervix is open and the uterus lacks tone (Kahn 2009). Uterine prolapse is known to occur in farm and captive ungulates (Woodward and Quesenberry 1956; Hooper et al. 1993; Ramadan and Hafez 1993), pets (Laber-Laird et al. 1996), and laboratory rodents (Foltz and Ullman-Cullere 1999), but is poorly documented in wild animals.

During a study of Richardson’s Ground Squirrel (Spermophilus richardsonii) populations in Ponteix (49°44’50”N, 107°29’16”W) in southern Saskatchewan, we live-captured an adult female with a partially prolapsed uterus in May 2009. The uterus hung down between the hind legs (Figure 1). The female had well-developed nipples and appeared to have lactated. We recaptured the animal four times over a 10-day period (i.e., every 2–3 days). During the first three recaptures, the animal showed no sign of illness. However, 10 days after the original capture, the uterus was bright pink and clean ventrally, but black and foul-smelling dorsally. Thereafter, we never recaptured this particular Richardson’s Ground Squirrel. Because she inhabited a field that was treated with an anticoagulant toxicant, she may have died from poisoning. On the other hand, because of necrosis and infection, uterine prolapse generally has a poor prognosis (Foltz and Ulman-Cullere 1999; Kahn 2009), and the Richardson’s Ground Squirrel may have died from her injuries.

There are no records of uterine prolapse in wild ground squirrel populations. Although we captured 629 female adults from 2007 to 2009, this was the only
case (0.2% rate of occurrence) observed. We do not believe that uterine prolapse is a common occurrence in Richardson’s Ground Squirrel populations.

Acknowledgments
This observation was recorded during a Richardson’s Ground Squirrel research program funded by the Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture (Agriculture Development Fund) and the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities. We are grateful to Dr. Louis Kwantes, Park Veterinary Centre, Sherwood Park, Alberta, and Pauline Feldstein, Alpha Wildlife Research & Management Ltd., for reviewing an earlier version of this manuscript.

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Received 28 September 2009
Accepted 12 April 2010