

Red Fox

(Vulpes vulpes)



DID YOU KNOW:

Though foxes and coyotes are found across North America, they generally do not inhabit the same areas. Foxes accept living closer to humans, so they might be found in city parks, greenways and even in cemeteries.

EATING HABITS:

Red Foxes are primarily carnivores. Rabbits and rodents make up most of their diet. A fox eats about a pound of meat at each feeding. When food is plentiful, a fox may kill more than it can eat and bury the extra in the ground, or cover it with grass or leaves. Sometimes the fox will return to its cache and find the food was eaten by another fox, crows, skunks or opossums. The fox is mostly active at night but may hunt early to catch active prey. If rodents and rabbits are scarce, the fox may eat fruits and insects.

THE YOUNG:

Baby foxes are called kits. In March or April, mom fox gives birth to four to six kits. At birth, the kits are helpless and completely dependent upon mom. Their eyes are closed and they can't hear. At 8 days, their eyes are open; at 8 weeks, their grayish/yellow fur is replaced by reddish-brown fur like their parents'. Then the young start hunting with their parents and at 5 months go out on their own.



HABITAT (HOME):

Red foxes may be found throughout most of the United States and Canada. They prefer living at the forest edge near open land. Most of the year the fox has no special home, so it just curls up and sleeps on the ground. A mother fox finds an old woodchuck hole, rock cavity or large hollow log on the sunny side of a hill to use as a den to raise her family.



DEFENSIVE HABITS:

Humans, large dogs and wolves are the fox's biggest enemies. Because they cannot overpower a large dog, foxes avoid fighting. Instead, they try to outsmart and trick the predator. The chased fox may backtrack on his own trail or cross into water so his scent is lost to the predator. Foxes are good swimmers and have very sharp teeth and claws.

UNUSUAL FACTS:

- Red foxes have a scent gland at the base of the tail. The skunk like odor from the scent gland is used to communicate the foxes' presence to other foxes.
- Red foxes aren't always red. They may be any shade from pale strawberry blond to very dark brown.