

THE ARBORETUM AT PENN STATE

RED FOX

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NAME: *Vulpes vulpes*

CONSERVATION STATUS:



SIZE: 2.4–4.6 feet

WEIGHT: 6.5–24 pounds

GROUP TERM: skulk; leash

NUMBER OF YOUNG: 2–12

HABITAT: forests; farms; prairies

LIFESPAN: 2–5 years

DISTRIBUTION:



RED FOX

DESCRIPTION

Well-known in folklore for its intelligence and cunning, the red fox is a medium-sized canid closely related to dogs and wolves. Sometimes exhibiting gray, brown, or silver fur, the red fox is famous for its bushy, white-tipped tail, which it uses for balance, communication, and warmth. An opportunist, this animal has adapted well to human encroachment and can often be found scavenging garbage cans and chicken coops at night. Forty-five subspecies are currently recognized, divided into the large northern foxes of North America and the small southern foxes of Asia and North Africa.

DIET

Red foxes are omnivores, feeding on rodents, fish, birds, rabbits, and other small animals. As habitat generalists, foxes will also eat fruits, vegetables, human refuse, pet food, and bird seed.

THREATS

High on the food chain, the red fox has few natural predators. Humans are its primary threat because some consider the fox to be a pest, and many have historically hunted this species for its soft pelt.

DID YOU KNOW?

- The red fox is crepuscular, actively hunting at dawn and dusk.
- Male foxes are referred to as “dogs,” while females are called “vixens.”
- Foxes are able to hear low-frequency sounds of rodents moving underground, and will sometimes “snow-dive” to catch small mammals under snow.

“Species Pages: Red Fox.” *Nature Trail*. The Pennsylvania State University, 2002. Web. 22 June 2017.

Fox, David L. “*Vulpes Vulpes* (red fox).” *Animal Diversity Web*. University of Michigan (Museum of Zoology), 2007. Web. 22 June 2017.

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