

Living with **Red Foxes**

Being the most widely distributed wild carnivore in the world, the **red fox** (*Vulpes vulpes*) is red over most of the body and has a white tip on the end of its tail. There is also a genetic color form of the red fox that is, in fact, black or silver in appearance. The fox is normally found in more open areas during the daytime and uses open fields and wooded areas at night.

Foxes are essentially nocturnal, but they can be seen feeding around dawn and dusk or occasionally during the day. Mice, rats and rabbits are the mainstays of both the gray and red fox diet, although they will consume almost anything edible. Small birds, mammals, reptiles, amphibians, fish, fruits, berries, insects and some carrion serve to supplement their diet. If food is plentiful, red foxes may kill more than they immediately need, and hide the extra in the ground for later. Foxes help maintain a balance in the rodent and rabbit populations, and they are also preyed upon themselves by bobcats and dogs. Young foxes may be preyed upon by owls, hawks or coyotes. **Unless an animal is sick or injured, foxes are generally not aggressive toward people.**

Naturally shy and reclusive predators, they avoid habitats supporting coyotes. This causes them to be fairly common in suburban areas, and can therefore come into conflict with people.

What can be done to prevent problems with foxes?

- Secure all possible food sources, including pet food and garbage. Improperly stored food can attract other unwanted predators, such as bears, raccoon, and skunk! So **be sure to keep pet food indoors.**
- Do not directly feed foxes or other wildlife. It is illegal to feed foxes on the Flathead Indian Reservation. Even if a fox is not eating the food you put out for birds or other wildlife, feeding stations can concentrate prey species and draw predators to your property.
- Properly pen small livestock such as chickens in enclosures that cannot be accessed by foxes or other predators



Legal Status

Hunting foxes by trapping or shooting is illegal within the Flathead Indian Reservation for tribal members without having first obtained a trapping permit from the Division of Fish, Wildlife, Recreation, and Conservation prior to trapping. The entire Reservation is closed to hunting or taking of any furbearers (other than specified in non-

Methods of deterring foxes from denning on your property:

Dens under porches, decks or sheds are not uncommon in urban areas. If you find a fox family in an inconvenient spot, consider allowing them to stay until the young are old enough to begin accompanying their parents on foraging outings. At this point they are nearly ready to say goodbye to the den site and move on for good.

Fox kits are born in the spring, usually in March or April, and you'll see them emerge from the den four or five weeks after birth. At nine weeks, they will begin to hunt with their parents. That's the moment to watch for, as it is then safe to encourage them to leave the den site if there is reason to hasten their departure.

member regulations), including fox, to non-tribal members. For additional details on furbearer hunting, you can access a copy of hunting, fishing, and recreation regulations at:

nrd.csktribes.org/regulations-applications

Please give the below methods your best efforts, if they fail to deter the foxes, lethal measures may result. There are no current Tribal or State rehabilitators for fox or fox kits at the current time.

- Loosely pack leaves, soil, or mulch in the den openings to disturb the residents.
- Mount shiny party balloons or 12-18 inch lengths of flagging mounted on sticks or poles two or three feet off the ground, just outside and around the den entrance.
- Haze any fox that is seen in a community or near homes or livestock. Bang pots and pans, blow an air horn, yell, and throw rocks near, but not at, the foxes. Make it as uncomfortable as a stay as you can, and they will naturally move on.
- Do not forget to prevent the foxes from returning to the den site by closing the entrance with fencing or rocks.



If you cannot deter the foxes from your property with these methods, contact the Tribal Game Wardens

They can be reached through Tribal dispatch 406-675-4700, and you will be transferred to a Game Warden.

