



Red Foxes

Vulpes vulpes

Gray Foxes

Urocyon cinereoargenteus

Understanding the habits and habitats of wildlife, and taking appropriate measures to prevent unwanted encounters, will help everyone to continue to enjoy the wonderful wild resources that still exist in New Jersey.

To start, do not panic! You can coexist peacefully with the fox in your yard or neighborhood. Many people with whom we have worked over the years initially called us in a panic and ended up finding the fox family to be a true joy to watch.

- Fox are generally crepuscular – meaning that they are most active around dawn and dusk. They may be active during the day or at night, however, seeing a fox during the day is not indicative of a problem.

Basic fox information

- Adult red fox only weigh between 6 and 15 lbs. (less than many domestic cats!). As a result of their small size, their prey items are also relatively small with most prey consisting of mice, rats, chipmunks, squirrels, rabbits and small birds. About the largest prey item they take is an adult rabbit (which weighs 2 – 2-1/2 lbs.) and they are typically taking smaller prey.
- Generally, you do not need to worry about your dog or cat unless you have puppies, kittens or a pocket-size dog that is left out unattended. We do not recommend you ever leave your pet out unattended just as a good matter of practice – there are other animals in your neighborhood looking for an easy meal.
- Fox also eat things like berries as they are omnivores.



Plug small holes with caulking or wood filler and fill larger holes with wooden plugs, steel wool, or wire screen before sealing.

About Mercer County Wildlife Center

The Mercer County Wildlife Center is a state and federally licensed facility that cares for injured, ill and displaced wildlife. The Center provides these animals with the medical treatment and a temporary refuge before releasing them back into an appropriate wild habitat.

For more information regarding the work we do and the animals who share our environment, including a series of printable brochures that provide tips for coexisting peacefully with those animals, visit us online at:

www.mercercountyparks.org/facilities/wildlife-center

For information on protecting bee hives and livestock, contact the Division of Fish and Wildlife Wildlife Control Unit at (908) 735-8793.



a member of the general public, you cannot interfere with them or their den in any way. As a member of the public, it is also illegal to trap and relocate them....so sit back and enjoy!

- Fox mate in the winter and the kits are typically born in late March to April. The kits are born in a den, which is commonly an abandoned woodchuck hole or under a deck, porch or shed. There are usually between 4 and 10 kits with 4 to 6 kits being most common. The kits are born with their eyes closed and they will not emerge from the den until they are about five weeks old. Their fur is initially dark brown and will turn to reddish as they get older.
- As the kits emerge from their den, they start a process of socializing. The kits will play together and the adults will hunt and bring food back to them. Eventually, the family will start to make more frequent and longer trips from the den site. This is the time that you are most likely to see fox in your yard if the den is nearby. Kits at this age have not yet developed their natural fear of people. It is extremely important that you stay away from them, keep your pets away from them and just observe the kits from a respectful distance.

There are typically two dens so that the adult fox can move the kits between the dens in order to avoid danger. When the kits are young, the adults will pick up each kit in their mouths and carry it to the new den location.

Co-existing with fox

Follow these basic steps:

- Never feed them - Feeding wildlife breaks down the natural fear barrier and brings wildlife closer to humans. Adult wildlife, including fox, are naturally afraid of people and this natural fear is important for their safety as well as human safety. A vast majority of human/wildlife conflicts occur because someone fed the wild animal and it became habituated to humans.
- DO NOT feed feral cats or your pet outdoors
- If you must feed a pet outdoors, be sure that you clean up any spilled food and do not leave the food out past daylight hours.
- If fox kits are outside playing, do not approach them and keep children and pets a respectful distance away.
- Do not reach into the entrance hole of a fox den.
- Walk outside and clap your hands several times before letting your dog out. This will alert wildlife to take cover.
- Cover window wells.

Remember that fox, like other native mammals, are protected by state law. As



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The Mercer County Wildlife Center is owned by Mercer County and operated by the Mercer County Park Commission with the support and assistance of Wildlife Center Friends.

Wildlife Center Friends is a 501(C)(3) non-profit organization formed to support the activities of the Mercer County Wildlife Center. • www.wildlifecenterfriends.org