

Red Fox

We occasionally see red foxes during the day when we're in the car and don't have a camera with us. Since they are mostly nocturnal, I'm hopeful that our trail cam will photo a fox one of these days. They are quick little things and I just haven't been able to photo one.

Foxes are solitary hunters and tend to eat mostly what is available. In the summer, they dine mostly on berries, fruits, nuts, invertebrates, and grasses. In the winter they rely more on birds and small mammals, including rabbits and woodchucks. Red fox depend on their ears to lead them to prey. They listen for the scratching of the mammals under the ground or under the snow, then they pounce and dig frantically to capture them. When I see them pounce, it reminds me of a kitten playing with a toy. They jump straight up and come down on all 4 paws. Foxes can jump up to 15 feet high but most of their hunting pounces are 3-6 feet in height!

Incredibly, the Red Fox adult does not seek out a den in the winter for sleep. They prefer to curl up on a ball on the ground (or snow). Their thick, bushy tail curls around them and provides sufficient warmth for their noses and extremities.

When January rolls around, they begin to seek out a mate. Courtship can continue for up to 2 weeks, then the male leaves, coming back a few weeks before the kits are born. They work together to make a nest, which can be anywhere that has some open space around it. Gestation is about 52 days and a normal litter consists of 3-6 kits.

Foxes are highly territorial and will attack viciously to drive off intruders. Adults have few predators but kits need to be on the watch for hawks and owls. The fox's more serious problem is the coyote, who will kill them whenever they can.

[National Geographic](#) has a bit more info and an audio track so you can hear their calls.