

FACTS ABOUT FOXES

Did you know ...

- During the winter months, the red fox's fur coat is at its fullest and brightest. This coat is shed in the spring, after which red foxes are much thinner and gaunter in appearance.

This is normal and does not mean the animal is sick or hungry.

- Although they often appear larger due to their bushy fur, adult foxes tend to weigh between 9 and 17 pounds, about the size of a small, slender domestic dog.
- **Red foxes are resourceful and clever hunters with excellent senses of sight, sound and smell.** In fall and winter, they feed primarily on small mammals (voles, mice, squirrels and rabbits) and in spring and summer, they also feed on berries and invertebrates (grasshoppers, caterpillars, crayfish and beetles. In cities, foxes will also scavenge on garbage and any human food that is left out for them.

- Adult foxes bring back live food for their kits. This familiarizes kits with the smell of prey and teaches them how to hunt and eat live animals. By three months of age, the kits are able to hunt for themselves.

- Woodlots, brushy marsh fringes, sand dunes, farmlands, and other open country are their preferred habitats, but in recent years more red foxes have moved into urban and suburban areas. It is suspected that this move has coincided with the arrival of Eastern coyotes to PEI in the early 1980's, as coyotes are superior competitors who typically do not tolerate foxes in their territories.

- **The red fox is a very intelligent and adaptable species, and in many areas has thrived in close association with humans. For a variety of reasons, however, feeding foxes is not recommended.**





PLEASE, DO NOT FEED THE FOXES

It can cause more harm than perceived good.

Harmful for foxes

- Foxes are hunters by nature and use their skills to find prey and evade predators. By taking away their need to hunt, they can lose their survival skills which could mean serious danger for the fox.
- Like humans and other animals, foxes require a healthy, balanced diet. Their health can be affected if they eat poorly which means they are more prone to acquire diseases and be infected by parasites.



Harmful for your pets

- Fox droppings can carry parasites. If your family dog comes in contact with this it can transmit both minor and severe illnesses to your pet.
- When attracted to urban and suburban areas, foxes may prey on small, unattended pets.
- Bringing more foxes into the urban area may also bring their predators (like coyotes) into the area.

Harmful for people

- Foxes can carry many parasites and diseases, some of which can be transferred to people. Diseases such as rabies are very rare on PEI but human exposure to foxes poses a health risk.
- Anyone coming in direct contact with the saliva of foxes, from bites or by feeding them, should seek medical attention.



How can I discourage foxes from visiting my property?

- 1) Do not feed foxes or place pet food outside
- 2) Ensure that garbage, compost and any other refuse is not accessible to them.
- 3) Bird feeders attract prey for foxes and food dropped on the ground can also attract foxes.
- 4) Exclude foxes from under sheds, patios and other shelter areas or potential den sites.

Contact Information

- Questions and concerns, contact Forest, Fish and Wildlife at (902) 368-4683
- If you have a complaint regarding feeding foxes within City limits, please call the City of Charlottetown at (902) 566-5548
- For more information visit <http://www.gov.pe.ca/forestry/problemwildlife>



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gov.pe.ca/go/wildlife