



## red fox

*Vulpes vulpes*

Kingdom: Animalia  
Division/Phylum: Chordata - vertebrates  
Class: Mammalia  
Order: Carnivora  
Family: Canidae

## FEATURES

The red fox has a head-body length of 22 to 25 inches and a tail about 14 to 16 inches long. It weighs eight to 15 pounds. The back is red, and the belly is white. The ears, legs and tops of the feet are black. The ears stand up straight and are very noticeable. The tail is fluffy with black hairs near the end and a white tip.

## BEHAVIORS

The red fox lives in grasslands, field edges, bottomland woods and brushy areas. This fox eats berries, birds, carrion, frogs, fruits, grasses, insects, mammals and turtles. The diet varies with the season. In the summer and fall, plants and insects are its main food. In the spring and winter it eats mainly mammals. It is active mostly at night. It marks its territory with a distinct scent. The male is called a "dog" and the female is a "vixen." The red fox barks, howls, whines and yips. The red fox uses a den to raise its family. The den is an underground burrow. Mating occurs in January and February. Young are born in March and April after a 51 day gestation period. After the pups are old

enough, the family leaves the den site and moves to a new spot that provides food and shelter. Families remain together until fall.

## HABITATS

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> bottomland forests | <input type="checkbox"/> rivers & streams               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> lakes, ponds & reservoirs     | <input type="checkbox"/> swamps                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lake Michigan                 | <input type="checkbox"/> temp water supplies            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> marshes                       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> wet prairies & fens |
| <input type="checkbox"/> peatlands                     |   |

## ILLINOIS STATUS

- |  |                                     |                                     |
|--|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> common | <input type="checkbox"/> endangered | <input type="checkbox"/> threatened |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> native | <input type="checkbox"/> exotic     |                                     |

## ILLINOIS RANGE

statewide

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Illinois Department of Natural Resources. 1999.  
*Biodiversity of Illinois, Volume I: Aquatic Habitats* CD-ROM.