

Learning in the Leaves

Identification- *Vulpes vulpes* - Fox



Photo: Fox showing bushy tail (by Kelvin Dean)

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Distinguishing Features

- An adult fox is about 70cm from head to tail, and the bushy tail or 'brush' is around 40cm long.
- Red Foxes have been living in the UK since the last ice age. They are mainly nocturnal, but you can sometimes see them during daylight hours. Red foxes sleep in underground dens. The dens appear similar to badger setts but you can tell when foxes are resident by the strong musky odour at the entrance hole.
- In the winter the fur coat of the fox becomes thicker, and a richer red-brown colour to help insulate them from the cold weather.

Interesting Facts

- Mating occurs in late December, and this is the time of year when foxes are at their noisiest. After dusk the males (dogs) emit a short loud bark, and the females (vixens) answer with an eerie scream which sounds frighteningly human.
- If you see a fox out in the daytime it doesn't necessarily mean it is sick. Foxes frequently hunt for food in daylight, especially when they have a litter of cubs to feed. However, if you see a fox with bald patches and gluey eyes, it is likely suffering from sarcoptic mange which can, and should be treated quickly.
- [information collated from the UK Safari Website: www.uksafari.com]