

Red foxes are important to the Elizabeth River's ecosystem because they help to control populations of their prey animals, such as rodents and rabbits. They also disperse seeds by eating fruit.



## Red Fox

### *Vulpes vulpes*

**Common Names:** Fox

**Lifespan:** 5 years

**Size:** Largest of the true foxes. Stand about 1.5 ft tall and measure 3 ft long. Their tails make up about ½ of their body length.

**Habitat:** Adapted to live in almost any habitat. Can be found in forests, mountains, deserts, urban areas, farms, and tundra. Prefer edge habitats that provide them with a lot of cover and spaces to build their dens.

**Range:** Found throughout the northern hemisphere including Europe, North America, and parts of Asia.

**Diet:** Foxes are considered omnivores (as most canines are) but the bulk of their diet is made up of animal sources. They most commonly prey on mice and rabbits, but their diet can be as flexible as their home or habitat, so they can also eat birds, insects, fruit, and even worms. They tend to make stores of their food for use in leaner times.

**Appearance:** Red foxes get their names from the color of their fur, which can range from a pale orange-red to a deep reddish brown. They have black feet, ear tips and noses along with a white strip going down their underside. They have large fluffy tails with a white tip at the end and are often used as a blanket to keep them warm in the winter!

**Predators:** Their main predators in the Elizabeth River watershed include owls, coyotes, and humans. But throughout the rest of their range they may be eaten by bears, wolves, mountain lions, and eagles.

**Voice:** Foxes are an incredibly vocal animal and uses about 12 different sounds to communicate with each other. These include growls, howls, yips, and barks. Foxes can identify each other's voices just like we do! *ow-wow-wow-wow!*

**What can you do?** Pick up and properly dispose of trash and make sure trash cans are secure

### On-Line Resources

[https://animaldiversity.org/accounts/Vulpes\\_vulpes/](https://animaldiversity.org/accounts/Vulpes_vulpes/)

[https://www.chesapeakebay.net/discover/field-guide/entry/red\\_fox](https://www.chesapeakebay.net/discover/field-guide/entry/red_fox)

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p01qfhsb>



[www.elizabethriver.org](http://www.elizabethriver.org)