

Winter 2022



About Ewing Township Animal Control

Officers work under the auspices of the Ewing Township Health Department. There are 2 full time officers who respond to over 600 complaints a year. Officers work to provide for public safety by preventing wildlife and nuisance animals from endangering the community.

Animal Control

Emergencies

Phone:

609-883-2900 X7175

After hours call

609-882-1313

Officers are on call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, including weekends and holidays.



I Saw a Fox in My Yard

Township of Ewing, New Jersey

Red Fox Vulpes vulpes

When the call comes into the Animal Control office “I saw a fox in my yard” the animal referred to is most often the Red Fox. New Jersey is home to 2 species of fox: the native **Gray Fox** (*Urocyon cinereoargenteus*) and the **Red Fox** (*Vulpes vulpes*). The gray fox is New Jersey’s native species while the English Red Fox was a species introduced during colonial times for sport that has acclimated quite well and thrives in New Jersey’s brushy fields and woodlands.

Although there is a population of gray fox in Mercer County, Ewing Animal Control has never received a sighting or complaint involving one. The red fox is highly identifiable by its bright red/orange color coat and long bushy, usually white tipped, tail. The average size of a red fox is between 12 and 15 pounds.

Many sightings occur during January and February which is mating season for fox as well as our coyotes, with litters being born in April and May. Foxes may have litters with as many as 14 kits; coyotes may have up to 9.

Interesting Facts

Foxes are generally not as wary of living close to humans, but both species are becoming more acclimated to suburbia due to development and habitat loss. This is when Animal Control begins getting the spring calls for fox denning under decks, yard sheds and the vacant property next door.

Interesting Fox Facts

Foxes are generally a night animal venturing out after dark to look for food sources such as mice, rats, and in the suburban environment, looking for food scraps in unsecured trash. It is not uncommon though for residents to see fox or coyotes during the day hunting squirrels and birds during the spring when hunting to feed the hungry family.

Fox and coyotes are also seen lounging during the daylight hours on sunny days. This is often a symptom of being infected with the mange, a condition caused by a parasitic mite found in nature. The foxes and coyotes often become infected when adopting abandoned groundhog burrows for sheltering a litter. The infection causes extreme itching and is evidenced by bald, scabby patches on the animal and a rope-like hairless tail making the animal appear “scroungy” as opposed to one with a beautiful full coat. Mange is highly contagious and can infect domestic dogs as well as other species. In domestic animals the condition is treatable, while with wildlife, the loss of hair is generally a death sentence in cold weather due to exposure from lack of insulating fur and hair.

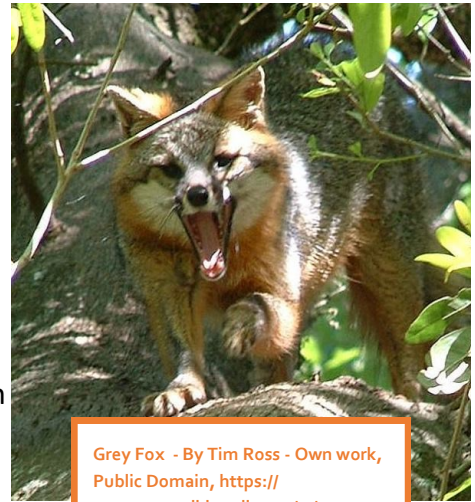
Foxes also suffer from the same diseases as coyotes, including rabies and distemper, although rabies and distemper are ultimately fatal diseases. The rabies virus is only transferable through saliva and blood and becomes inactive shortly after the death of the host animal, while the distemper virus may remain active in feces and areas where the host frequented for up to a year. Preventive vaccines for these diseases in domestic animals are available through private veterinary clinics, municipal animal shelters and state and locally sponsored vaccination clinics.

Living with Foxes

Foxes can live in close association with people and are frequently seen in the community as they can find plenty of food, water, and cover. You may find them in your backyard, trotting down the street, or in our local parks, especially those near undeveloped lands. They are seldom aggressive towards humans as they have become accustomed to human activity. However, they can prey on domestic animals. Do not allow your pets to run free. Cats should be kept indoors, particularly at night, and small dogs should be on a leash and under supervision at all times. Close off areas where they might be attracted for resting and raising young such as crawl spaces under decks and sheds.

Never Feed Foxes!

Again, it's the responsibility of all residents to keep our unwanted wildlife encounters at a minimum by not feeding our pets outdoors, keeping all trash and garbage containing food and related items indoors until collection day, and NEVER FEEDING WILDLIFE outside a zoo!



Grey Fox - By Tim Ross - Own work, Public Domain, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=3071388>