

TOOLBOX TALK NO.56

Biodiversity: Foxes



In Britain, foxes were first known in cities such as Bristol and London during the 1940s. Foxes are one of the UK's most common and extensive animals. They can happily thrive both in rural and urban habitats. Fox populations are generally higher in urban areas, during the 1990s, a parasitic disease called sarcoptic mange spread across most of mainland Britain causing declines in both rural and urban foxes. The decline was more noticeable in some populations however despite this, the populations are recovering.



Foxes are classified as wild animals and not as pests. They are however not protected legally beyond the prevention of cruel killing (e.g. crushing, poisoning or asphyxiation).

A fox can run at speeds of up to 30mph and can jump 3 feet, this enables them to climb over 6-foot fences.

Foxes are largely nocturnal, so may not be seen even when they are occupying a site.

What can we do to discourage foxes from entering the site/work area?

- Cordon off areas they can shelter in at night
- Keep all food waste out of reach and dispose of accordingly.
- Should you see a fox on site, advise the sustainability team immediately. Do not attempt to catch the animal.

Characteristics

- Foxes have a slender appearance, pointed ears and an elongated muzzle. The coat is generally reddish with the back of their ears and the front of their legs black and the throat and belly from white to grey.
- Foxes will eat almost anything, from rodents to berries, birds and insects to human leftovers.
- Their paw prints resemble those of dogs with four toes and an oval shaped pad
- Foxes are not especially dangerous to humans (unless tempted by food or ill) or some pets. The reason they do not attack dogs, cats or humans is because they do not see this as prey. They do however carry a range of diseases and many parasites so contact with them should be avoided.



How can we help foxes?

If you see an injured fox or a fox caught in a snare, get in touch with the RSPCA or your local wildlife sanctuary. It is not advisable to try and rescue the fox, as you could end up hurting it more.

