

Red & Gray Foxes

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The gray fox and red fox are members of the Canidae biological family, which puts them in the same family as domestic dogs, wolves, jackals and coyotes. The red fox is termed “*Vulpes vulpes*” in Latin for the genus and species. The gray fox is termed “*Urocyon cinereoargenteus*”.

Gray foxes are sometimes mistaken to be red foxes but red foxes are slimmer, have longer legs and larger feet and have slit-shaped eyes. Gray foxes have oval shaped pupils. The gray fox is somewhat stout and has shorter legs than the red fox. The tail has a distinct black stripe along the top and a black tip. The belly, chest, legs and sides of the face are reddish-brown.



Red foxes have a slender body, long legs, a slim muzzle, and upright triangular ears. They vary in color from bright red to rusty or reddish brown. Their lower legs and feet have black fur. The tail is a bushy red and black color with a white tip. The underside of the red fox is white. They are fast runners and can reach speeds of up to 30 miles per hour. They can leap more than 6 feet high.

Red and gray foxes primarily eat small rodents, birds, insects, nuts and fruits.

Gray foxes typically live in dense forests with some edge habitat for hunting. Their home ranges typically are 2-4 miles. Gray foxes can also be found in suburban areas. Ideal red fox habitat includes a mix of open fields, small woodlots and wetlands – making modern-day Maryland an excellent place for it to live. Red foxes are also highly adaptive and can be found in suburban and urban areas.

The red fox is capable of learning from experience, which has earned it the “cunning” namesake in literature. This clever nature, its adaptability and careful management, ensure that the red fox will roam the wild for many generations to come.