



FOX FACTS

The European fox, *Vulpes vulpes*, was introduced into Australia in the 1850s for recreational hunting purposes and has spread across 76% of the continent. The fox is one of the most successful predators in the world and, with few natural threats in Australia, they pose an enormous threat to our fragile ecosystems and to agriculture and domestic pets.

They have excellent sight, smell, and hearing for skilled hunting, and have speed, agility, some climbing ability and wide dietary adaptability. They are predominantly opportunistic carnivores, but are also effective scavengers, consuming carrion and rubbish, and a range of fruits, vegetables, seeds, eggs and insects.

Threats

The total annual cost of foxes to Australia's environment and economy is estimated to be \$227.5 million.

- ◆ Foxes cause environmental damage by preying on many species of Australian native birds, reptiles and small to medium mammals. Evidence suggests foxes are a primary cause in the decline and extinction of many small and medium sized mammal species in Australia.
- ◆ Serious economic and psychological damage results from fox predation on farm livestock and on household pets and poultry.
- ◆ In high density areas they may also be a health risk to humans, pets and native mammals through transmission of diseases such as distemper, parvo virus and mange.

Urban and peri-urban people can contribute to fox control

Foxes inhabit many urban areas, often in higher densities than rural and agricultural areas, especially where there is cover provided by parklands and reserves and food is easy to find.

What you can do

- ◆ Bring any leftover pet food inside at night
- ◆ Keep compost contained
- ◆ Build fox-proof fencing for poultry and other small outdoor pets
- ◆ Notify your local Council if you have a problem with foxes

Legislation

- ◆ In Victoria red foxes (*Vulpes vulpes*) are declared as established pest animals under the *Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994*. Under this Act land owners have a responsibility to take all reasonable steps to prevent the spread of, and as far as possible eradicate, established pest animals from their land.
- ◆ Fox predation has been listed as a key threatening process under schedule 3 of the *Commonwealth Endangered Species Protection Act 1992* and the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.