

# 2019 ANNUAL REPORT

## Friends of the Island Fox

a program of Channel Islands Restoration  
a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization

### Reaching New Goals Together

Island foxes are thriving. Conservation needs are now focused on long-term species survival. With your help, Friends of the Island Fox (FIF) is meeting these new goals to fund island fox monitoring and scientific investigations into health threats.

#### 44 radio-tracking collars

For the first time, FIF funded radio-tracking collars for foxes on four islands in a single year. Monitoring island foxes is the highest priority, and we hope to meet this goal again in 2020.

#### \$8,000 in health investigations

Donations and a continuing grant from the Fresno Chaffee Zoo Wildlife Conservation Fund enabled investigations into tick-borne diseases, introduced viruses on Catalina Island, and two intestinal parasites that threaten San Miguel Island foxes.

#### 1,434 students and adults visiting the islands

FIF volunteers taught these island-bound travelers about the island fox and best behavior practices for observing island foxes in the wild.

#### 2 research projects funded

The FIF Research Grant funded a second year and analysis of 500 additional island fox whiskers. Stable isotopes in whiskers reveal 4–6 months of an individual fox's diet. Expanding the project will focus on seasonal dietary changes and the importance of marine resources for foxes. The hunt continues for clues as to how the deadly spiny-headed worm is being introduced into the San Miguel Island fox's diet.

With a donation from Safari West in Sonoma, CA, FIF funded a second research project. Currently, island fox age is unreliably estimated by tooth wear, which varies with diet and habitat. This project will investigate structural rings in island fox teeth and whether they can be used to accurately determine the age of an island fox at death. This is important because a change in life span is an early sign of potential health issues in a population. This work could also identify whether different age groups are more susceptible to injury from cars or other human impacts.

#### How are the island foxes doing?

Most island fox populations are stable and appear to have increased in 2019 due to normal rainfall levels. Deadly parasites, however, continue to cause concern for the San Miguel Island fox.

Stay current with island fox news through FIF's e-newsletter. To subscribe, visit [islandfox.org](http://islandfox.org).



Photos, top to bottom, courtesy of:  
M. Navarro, NPS; S. Baker;  
A. Hebein  
Photo at right courtesy of I. Rose



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# More numbers to yip about

**6,000**

website pages on [islandfox.org](http://islandfox.org) were investigated by students and interested people monthly.

**6**

Island Fox Ambassador schools funded 15 refurbished radio collars and one new radio collar. Fox Ambassador students turn their love of island foxes into conservation action.

**1,233**

hours were donated by 18 FIF volunteers for special events, education outreach, and other efforts to help island foxes.

**1**

person can make a difference. Three students did island fox projects and two supporters connected FIF to Safari West and Wolf Park, expanding our funding. Share your ideas by emailing [admin@islandfox.org](mailto:admin@islandfox.org).

**2,937**

new people were introduced to the island fox through FIF's education programs and events in 2019.

## What comes next?

FIF's priorities for 2020 are:

- Funding 40 radio collars to meet the needs across four Channel Islands.
- Continuing important investigations into island fox health issues: diet, parasites, and introduced diseases.
- Building research knowledge about island foxes by funding the \$5,000 FIF Research Grant in 2020.
- Helping facilitate expanded capabilities at a CA research facility to store vital biological specimens collected from deceased island foxes. Preserving this data is vital to future scientific research and island fox health.

Photo above courtesy of A. Machlis

