

About the Island Fox

The island fox (*Urocyon littoralis*) lives on six of the eight California Channel Islands. Four of the six subspecies are listed as endangered under the U.S. Endangered Species Act.

In recent years, the foxes have almost disappeared on the northern islands of San Miguel, Santa Rosa, and Santa Cruz and been threatened by disease on Santa Catalina Island. In 1999 only 14 foxes remained on San Miguel Island, down from a population of 450. Since 2002, captive breeding programs have increased all the endangered populations.

The island fox is one of the smallest canid species in the world, about the size of a housecat. They weigh from three to four lbs. and only stand about 12-13" high, 20% smaller than their closest relative, the mainland gray fox.

This tiny fox is active during the day foraging for fruit, vegetation, mice, insects and crabs.



photo provided by

Why have they Declined?

The foxes on Santa Catalina, San Miguel, Santa Rosa and Santa Cruz islands are endangered and have been held in captive breeding facilities until recently to ensure their survival. Their populations dropped when golden eagles began hunting them on the northern islands and an outbreak of canine distemper contracted from a domestic dog within Santa Catalina Island population.

In 1993 the Park Service recognized a large decline in the island fox population. Eight foxes were radio-collared for a study in 1998. In just a few months four of the eight foxes were attacked; the culprit identified by a long golden eagle feather left by the carcass.

Historically the bald eagle had occupied the islands. Bald eagles are territorial fishing eagles, who do not prey on island foxes. In the 1950s and 60s bald eagles had disappeared due to the effects of high levels of the pesticide DDT, in the coastal ocean and fish. Birds ingesting the pesticide DDT lay eggs with thin shells that break before hatching.

The golden eagle was attracted to the northern islands by the abundance of feral piglets on Santa Cruz. They also discovered the easy-to-catch island fox. The decimation of the island fox had begun. The fox knew no predator and had little cover as the chaparral vegetation had been eaten back by the many introduced species on the islands. In contrast to the mainland gray fox, the island fox hunts by day so is easily spotted by a hunting golden eagle.

How Will Your Contributions Help

- Support island fox recovery programs, designed to save the island fox from extinction
- Provide tracking collars for released island foxes
- Support conservation education programs for school children and raise awareness about the island fox within the community
- Support the monitoring of wild fox populations



photo by Kaitin Daughterty



Photo by Kris Willis



How You Can Help

Donation:

Yes, I would like to help the island fox by donating \$ _____

Name: _____
(Please print)

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

Telephone: (____) _____

Email: _____

____ Check Enclosed
(payable to *Friends of the Island Fox, Inc*)

____ MC ____ Visa ____ Am. Express ____ Discover

Credit Card #: _____

Expiration Date: _____

Signature: _____

All donations are tax-deductible under
Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

Please mail or fax to:

Friends of the Island Fox, Inc.
3760 Groves Place
Somis, CA 93066

Fax: 805 / 386-4030

Thank You!

Goals

Our goal is to raise funds to enable grants and supplies to be made available for projects and research involved with the preservation and conservation of the island fox.

Current Projects:

- Providing funding for telemetry tracking collars for National Park Service island fox releases.
- Educating the public about the island fox, and the California Channel Islands through lectures, literature, video and DVD, and the media.

Who Are We?

Friends of the Island Fox, Inc. is the joint effort of conservation professionals and concerned private citizens striving to create public awareness about the endangered island fox and to raise funds to support education, research and conservation measures to ensure the island fox's survival.



Photo by Jason Bean
Brooks Institute of
Photography



Working together to save the Island Fox

Friends of the Island Fox, Inc.

3760 Groves Place
Somis, CA 93066

www.IslandFox.org
admin@islandfox.org

Phone: 805 / 386-0386
Fax: 805 / 386-4030

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