

YOU FOUND A FOX — WHAT TO DO

Raccoons, foxes, bats, skunks and coyotes are all RVS or 'rabies vector species,' which means they are able to carry the rabies virus. Therefore, never handle these species, even babies. Always call St. Francis Wildlife. If an RVS nips or scratches you, or its saliva comes in contact with an open wound on your body, it will need to be tested for the rabies virus. This test necessitates euthanizing the animal.

Foxes out during the day

The old assumption that if they are seen out during the day foxes are rabid is not true. Foxes are mostly nocturnal; however, it is quite common, especially in urban areas, for a healthy animal to venture out during the day if it is hungry or its den has been destroyed. Frequently, mother foxes that are nursing babies will search for food night and day. Pet food left outdoors will attract wildlife — rats, raccoons, foxes, opossums and others. The best way to prevent wildlife from becoming a nuisance is to remove the attractant. It is illegal in Florida to intentionally feed raccoons, foxes, bears and Sandhill Cranes.

Distemper and foxes

Distemper is a common disease in foxes. Distemper symptoms closely resemble rabies symptoms. Both are related to the nervous system and may include paralysis, circling, and lack of fear of humans. Distemper cannot be transmitted to humans, but always keep your pets' rabies and distemper vaccinations current. Care should be taken when a fox looks sick or acts strangely, but overreaction against all foxes is unwarranted.

If you see an injured or sick fox that can't walk or run away, call us. If the animal is sick but walking or running it would be very difficult to catch and probably will not still be there by the time we arrive.

Mange and foxes

Another common disease in foxes is mange. Sarcoptic mange is caused by microscopic mites. Mites burrow into the outer layer of the skin causing intense irritation. Lightly infected individuals may suffer only short-term effects; however, heavily infected individuals suffer from fur loss, crusty skin and malnutrition.

At advanced stages of the disease, infected individuals are often seen wandering around during the daytime, especially in cold weather. The infected animals try to maintain their body temperature by seeking warmth under the sun.



These foxes have mange.

Mange is easily treatable. If the fox can be trapped; we will be happy to treat it at St. Francis Wildlife. Please call us about foxes that appear to have mange.