

## What to do about foxes

Foxes out during the day are no cause for alarm—but if you need to send a fox family on their way or are worried about rabies, here is what you need to know.

- Both red and gray foxes live among us in cities and towns, where scavenging for food makes life easy. They generally avoid people, but the lure of easy food, such as pet food or unsecured garbage, can result in backyard visits. Usually, the best thing to do is leave foxes alone.
- Foxes have a natural fear of people. If you see one outside during the day, it's no cause for alarm. They will usually run away from you as soon as they detect your presence.
- If not, the fox has probably learned to associate people with food (likely because someone has been feeding them) and may exhibit a boldness or even approach you. These foxes can easily be scared away by making loud noises such as yelling or blowing whistles, dousing them with water hoses or squirt guns or throwing objects such as tennis balls toward them.
- Foxes are not dangerous to humans, except when they are rabid (which is very rare) or when they are captured and handled. Even then, a fox's natural tendency is to flee rather than fight.
- Foxes may prey on small pets.
- A fox cutting through your yard is probably just passing through on their way between hunting areas and no action is necessary on your part.
- Both red and gray foxes dig dens mostly for raising kits, but also to use as shelter from severe winter weather.
- Dens under porches, decks or sheds are not uncommon shelter areas.
- If you need a fox family to move on sooner rather than later, harassment may encourage an earlier move try the below suggestions.
- Apply loosely pack leaves, soil, or mulch in the den openings to disturb the residents.
- Place urine-soaked kitty litter, a sweat-soaked T-shirt, a pair of smelly sweat socks or old sneakers in or near the den opening.
- Spread capsicum-based granular repellent (such as Havahart's Critter Ridder) around the den entry.

**For more information contact Bowie Animal Control 301-809-3002**