

Fennec Fox

**Scientific Name:**

Vulpes zerda

Range:

Southern Morocco and Niger to Egypt and the Sudan, occasionally the Sinai and Arabian peninsulas

Habitat:

Desert

Average Size:

Body Length: 16-18.5 inches

Body-Tail Length: 24-32.5 inches

Weight: 2-3 pounds

Lifespan:

13-14 years in captivity

Diet:

Wild: Small rodents, birds, lizards, insects, fruit and other plant matter

Zoo: Produce, dog food, insects, meat

Reproduction:

Gestation: 50-53 days

Litter size: 2-5 kits

Appearance:

These tiny foxes are pale gold in color. The face has a very sharply pointed muzzle and is topped by 6 inch, fur covered ears. The tail is about ½ the length of the body and is tipped with black.

Predators:

Jackals, domestic dogs and humans

Population Status:

Stable

**About the Animal**

The Fennec Fox is the world's smallest canine. Despite its tiny size, the ears are the largest of all canines (compared to the size of the body), reaching about 6 inches in length.

Like all canines, Fennecs are omnivores, and will eat fruit and desert plants – and hunt down small rodents, birds, lizards, and insects. The enormous ears help them to accomplish this: their hearing

is so acute, they can even hear rodents and even insects moving beneath the sand.

Fennecs are well adapted for staying cool in the harsh, Sahara desert. They are nocturnal, and spend the day sleeping in dens they dig themselves. The large ears act as heat exchangers, helping to cool down the body. They even have hair on the soles of their paws to avoid burning the skin on the pads. Fennecs are even able to survive years without drinking any water, obtaining the liquid they need from desert plants and other food – although they will drink when water is available.

Fennecs are terrific diggers. Sometimes they dig so quickly it seems as though the sand is swallowing them. They use this ability to dig long burrows in the sides of desert hills, which they live in.

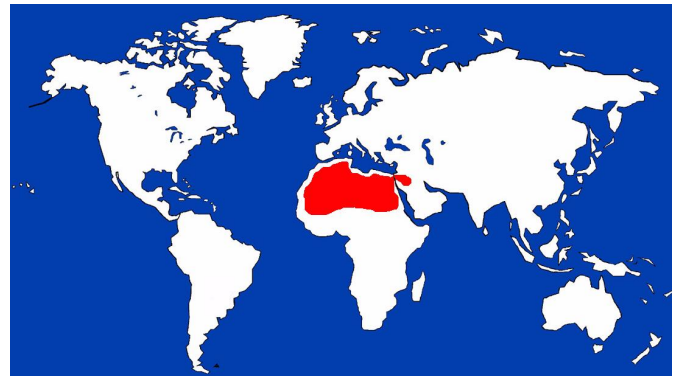
Presently, Fennecs are not considered endangered, although there is concern at rate at which it seems to be disappearing from its native range.

Mating and Reproduction

Mating season occurs in January and February, with 2-5 kits being born in the permanent den. Females are very protective of the young, and sensitive to disturbance. Males assist with the chore of feeding mother and kits, but will not enter the den to avoid upsetting the female and her kits.

Amazing Information:

Fennecs are very vocal and 'talk' to one another constantly. They bark, yip, growl and even purr!



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