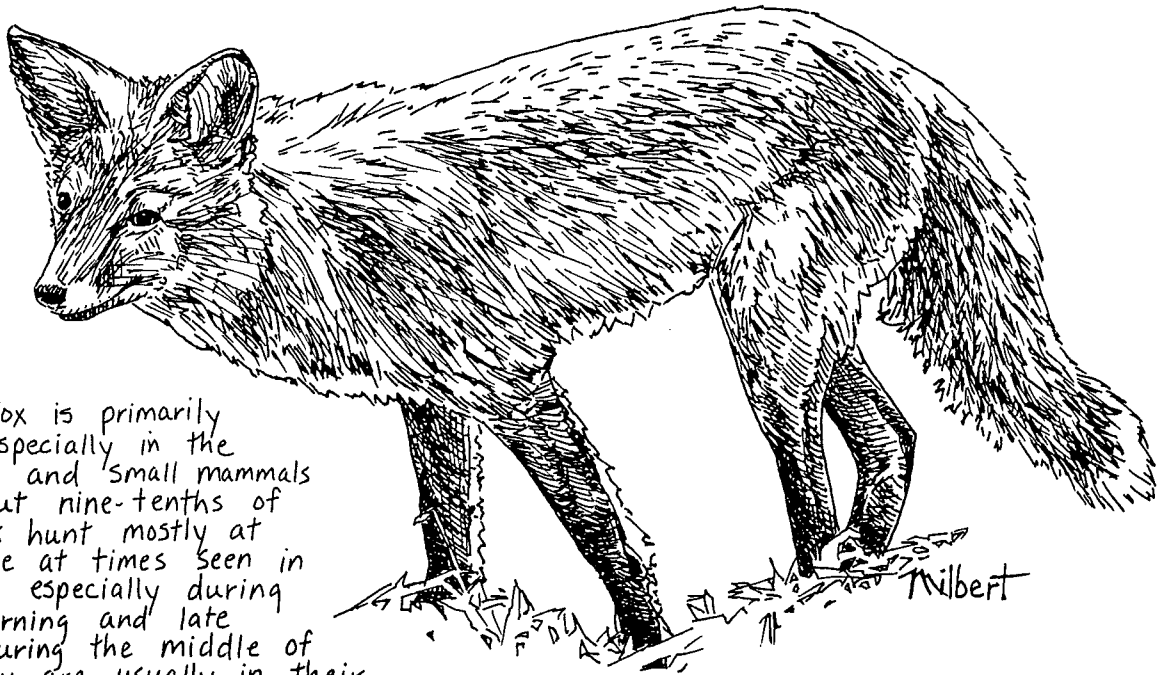


# River Bend Naturalists Notebook

Presented by: RIVER BEND NATURE CENTER, Faribault, MN 55021

## RED FOX

*Vulpes fulva*



The Red Fox is primarily carnivorous, especially in the winter. Mice and small mammals make up about nine-tenths of its diet. Fox hunt mostly at night, but are at times seen in the day-light especially during the early morning and late afternoon. During the middle of the day they are usually in their dens or sunning themselves while watching for possible enemies.

The Red Fox has several color phases, the most common of which are red, cross, black and silver. In all phases it is characterized by the white-tipped tail, black feet and legs. The red phase is the most commonly seen in this area.

Red Foxes probably mate for life. The den is usually in the open, on a sunny hillside. It may be in a rock cavity, in a hollow log, or frequently in an abandoned woodchuck den. The bed for the young is lined with grasses.

Mating occurs from January to March when the Red Fox's high pitched barking enlivens the wintery night. After a gestation period of 48 to 56 days, the young are born, usually four to six per litter. Pups stay in the den until they are weaned, at about eight to ten weeks. By fall they are full grown and usually go their own way.

The Red Fox is 25 to 29 inches long, with a fourteen to sixteen inch tail. Weight averages about 10-15 pounds.

- text by Orwin A. Rustad.