

The Fox (Sionnach) / Madra Rua

Vulpes Vulpes, Linneas.

An tSeirbhís Páirceanna Náisiúnta & Fiadhúla

National Parks & Wildlife Service

Identification

The Fox is common and widespread in Ireland. It is the only wild member of the dog family and is easily recognised by its doglike appearance. The red Fox is the size of a large domestic cat, and males are slightly larger than the females. It is difficult to tell the dog from the vixen unless she is feeding her cubs. The Foxes overall colour can range from a yellowish brown to reddish brown. The foxes hearing is very acute and is important for hunting and communications.

Diet

The fox is a carnivore, its diet is extremely varied. In Ireland the diet depends on the location and time of year. The Foxes principle prey are, rabbits, young hares, brown rats and wood mice. Irish foxes take proportionately more rats than do foxes in Britain even where rabbits are present. Foxes also eat small birds, pigeons eggs and a range of fruit particularly blackberries and apples. Foxes living near the coast will eat crabs and fish.

Habitat

If food and shelter are available, the fox will prosper in areas of habitat diversity. The foxes are found in farmland, woodland, and coastal areas sand dunes and suburban areas. Foxes are territorial and live in family groups. The Composition of the group varies. In high density areas populations it usually contains one adult male, one breeding vixen and a number of one or two non breeding females. These females are normally relatives of the most dominant female.

Sainaithint

Tá an Madra Rua go coitianta agus go fairsing in Éirinn. Is é an t-aon bhall fiain amháin d'fhine an mhada agus is furasta é a aithint toisc go bhfuil cuma an mhada air. Tá an Madra Rua chomh mór le cat mór baile agus bionn an madra rua fireann beagán níos mó ná an ceann baineann. Bionn sé deacair idirleathú a dhéanamh idir an madra rua fireann agus an bháirseach ach amháin nuair a bionn an bháirseach ag beathú a cuid coileán. Dath buidhonn nó deargdhonn a bhionn ar an Madra Rua. Tá éisteacht an-gheár ag an madra rua agus tá sin tábhachtach maidir le sealgaireacht agus cumarsáid.

Cothú

Is feoilteoir é an madra rua, agus bionn an-éagsúlacht sna nithe a itheann sé. Braitheann sin, más in Éirinn é, ar cá háit a bhfuil sé agus cén tráth den bhliain atá ann. Is iad coiníni, giorriacha óga, francaigh dhonna agus luchóga feir a chreacann an Madra Rua den chuid is mó. I gcomhréir le madraí rua sa Bhreatain gabhann madraí rua in Éirinn níos mó francach, fiú amháin má bhíonn coiníní thart timpeall. Itheann an madra rua éin bheaga, uibheacha an cholúr agus réimse torthai, go hárithé smára dubha agus illa. Má bhíonn cóináir ar an madra rua cois farraige itheann sé portáin agus éisc.

Gnáthóg

Má tá bia agus didean ar fail dó, rachaidh an madra rua chun cinn i limistéir a bhfuil éagsúlacht gnáthóige iontu. Faigtear an madra rua ar thalamh feirme, sa choilleannach, cois farraige, sna dumhacha agus sna fo-bhailte. Is ainmhi dùchíoch é an madra rua agus is i ngrúpa clainne a chónaíonn sé. Bionn éagsúlacht i gcomhdhéanamh an ghrúpa sin. I limistéir a mbíonn daonra mór acu ann bionn madra rua fireann amháin, báirseach amháin a dhéanann siolrú agus ceann amháin ná dhá cheann den chineál baineann nach ndéanann siolrú sa chomhdhéanamh. De ghnáth bionn gaol idir na cinn baineann seo agus an ceann baineann is ceannasaí.



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