

# Fennec Fox

**Scientific Name:** *Vulpes zerda*

**Class:** Mammalia

**Order:** Carnivora

**Family:** Canidae



The fennec fox is the smallest of all the wild canids. They show the typical features associated with a desert species. The coat is a pale cream overall, often with darker coloration, ranging from fawn to gray on the sides of the body, and a more solid line running along the spine. Head & body length is from 9 to 16 inches, and weight from 1 to 3 pounds. The large ears of the fennec fox, which help it to hear effectively and assist with thermal regulation, can measure up to 6 inches in length. The teeth are relatively small, with the canines being reduced in size. They will drink at water holes in the desert, but also appear well adapted to survive with a minimum intake of fluid. In some areas it appears that they may have declined in numbers because of this hunting.

---

## Range

North Africa, Southwest Asia

## Habitat

Deserts and semi-arid areas

## Gestation

50 to 52 days

## Litter

2 to 5

## Behavior

Fennec foxes occupy a permanent den, which they dig themselves. Their burrowing activity may also trigger the formation of dew, which can be lapped up. They appear to be relatively social, living in family groups in some areas, although the core structure of this colonial living is the breeding pair. They can move quite rapidly and are able to jump distances of 4 feet or more. They bark like a small dog, but also make a purring sound like a domestic cat. If threatened, they will snarl.

## Reproduction

The female fennec can produce two litters in a year. If the first litter is lost, she is likely to give birth again between 2-1/2 and 3 months later. Mating tends to occur in captivity during January and February. Females become quite aggressive when they have a litter, vigorously defending their den. The male fox does not cross the threshold but provides food for the group. The young are weaned by 10 weeks and will be mature by one year.

## Wild Diet

Insects, lizards, small rodents, occasional birds, fruits and berries