

KIT FOX
(VULPES MACROTIS)

Navajo/Federal Statuses: NESL G4 / not listed under the ESA.

Distribution: Historic range includes desertland areas of southern OR and ID south through NV, UT, and CA to Baja Peninsula and southeast through AZ, NM, and western TX to northern-central Mexico; current range is reduced in size, but not well documented. Known from Navajo Nation east of Chuska Mountains and Chinle Valley in AZ and UT; potential in all desertlands on Navajo Nation.

Habitat: Dens excavated in desertscrub or desert grasslands with soft, alluvial or silty-clay soils, and often with sparse saltbush, shadscale, greasewood, or sagebrush, and grasses. Dens have 2-25 key-hole-shaped entrances (average of 3) that are 20-25 cm (8-10 inches) in height and < 20-cm wide.

Similar Species: Smallest-bodied wild canine of Navajo Nation with pale grayish body, large ears for head size, black-tipped tail and buff-colored ears; red fox has reddish body and white-tipped tail; gray fox has grizzled body, median line of dark hairs on dorsum of tail, black-tipped tail, and reddish ears; coyote is much larger in body size and weight (4-times heavier).

Phenology:

e.SEP-l.OCT: females prepare natal dens

e.OCT-l.NOV: males join females at natal dens

e.DEC-e.FEB: mating season

e.FEB-l.MAR: birthing of young

e.MAR-l.APR: young first emerge from natal dens (1 month of age)

l.JUL-e.AUG: young acquire adult weight and fur, independent at 5 months

e.OCT-l.OCT: dispersal of young, family groups split

Survey Method: ≥1 nocturnal survey with spotlight, and/or diurnal survey for dens, during 1 APR-31 JUL.

Avoidance: No ground-disturbing activities, year-round, within 60 m of known den-site; no activity within 0.2 km (1/5 mi) of active den during 1 DEC-31 AUG.

References:

Hoffmeister, D.F. 1986. Mammals of Arizona. The University of Arizona Press. (description p.471)
McGrew, J.C. 1979. Mammalian Species, No.123, pp.1-6. American Society of Mammalogists.