

PEST CONTROL SERVICE

Pest Information Leaflet No. 13

FOXES



Description

Over the past decade the number of urban foxes had increased significantly, although number have now reached a state of equilibrium. Whilst known as the urban fox, there is no distinction whatsoever between it and the "rural fox". Some people regard the presence of foxes as a desirable and attractive element of wild life around their homes whilst to others the fox is a persistent and infuriating nuisance.

Biology and Habit

Foxes mate during January and February, litters (average size five) are born in March and April and cubs may remain with the vixen until July.

The urban fox is generally nocturnal and its search for food, in addition to mice, moles, insects, earthworms, may include scavenging from dustbins and bird tables etc. and when rearing cubs may occasionally take pets or poultry not held in secure pens and hutches. Foxes and cats regularly encounter and usually ignore each other.

In urban areas foxes will find cover and sites for earths in numerous locations including parks, cemeteries, overgrown gardens, beneath sheds etc.

Importance

Foxes do cause nuisance in a number of ways. During the mating season the noise of barks and blood-curdling screams proliferate, and in addition

to the feeding habits described above there is damage to gardens caused when digging for food and of course the indiscriminate depositing of faeces. Foxes in the United Kingdom may occasionally spread disease such as mange, toxocara and leptospirosis but the risk is believed to be small.

Control

Killing foxes in urban areas is both unnecessary and unlikely to provide a long term solution as other foxes move in to vacant territories. Stroud District Council's Pest Control Service does not provide a fox trapping or eradication service.

If foxes are living on or under your property then specialist advice should be sought (see below). If you wish to deter them from gaining access to your property at night do not use a chemical preparation - most are illegal and those few which are not, are approved for home garden use only, usually to deter cats and dogs, and are not proven against foxes. You can discourage foxes from areas where they are unwelcome by not feeding them, clearing undergrowth, proofing areas under garages and sheds and securing waste in solid bins. Fences of a minimum 2 m height with a 30 cm overhang should keep them out as also single strand electric fencing at heights of 15 cm and 35 cm.

Further Advice

For more specific information to that detailed above contact the "Fox Project" either in writing or to its Headquarters at PO Box 56, Tunbridge, Kent, TN9 1XY or telephone its advice line on (01732) 365340. Alternatively contact A.D.A.S. at Burghill Road, Westbury on Trym, Bristol BS10 6NJ telephone (01179) 591000.

Pest Control Service
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- " 2 Psocids
- " 3 Fleas
- " 4 Ants
- " 5 Solitary (Masonary) Bees
- " 6 Carpet Beetles
- " 7 Woodlice
- " 8 Cluster Flies
- " 9 Earwigs
- " 10 Bats
- " 11 Slugs and Snails
- " 12 Badgers
- " 13 Foxes

Leaflets Available in this Series

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