



## Have you seen a Gray Fox?

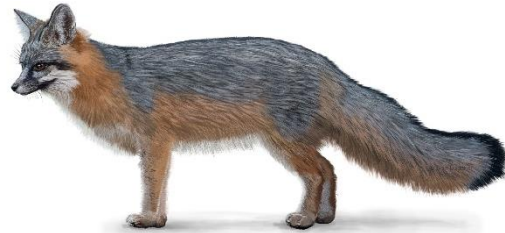
### Gray Fox Fact Sheet, Thunder Bay Field Naturalists

Many of us have never heard of a Gray Fox (*Urocyon cinereoargenteus*). This is not surprising, since this little known, distant relative of the Red Fox (*Vulpes vulpes*) is primarily active at night and is much rarer, especially in northern Ontario. The Gray Fox is a species at risk, and is considered Threatened both in Ontario and Canada-wide. In northwestern Ontario, the species is at the northern edge of its range. Gray Foxes typically prefer deciduous and mixedwood forests, often with clearings and streams. They can climb trees with ease, feeding on berries, fruit, and small animals, and can be found in or close to urban areas.

There have been increasing numbers of Gray Foxes reported in the Thunder Bay area in recent years. The Thunder Bay Field Naturalists Club is interested in learning more about its occurrence, and is asking for your help in monitoring them.



It can be difficult to tell a Gray Fox from a Red Fox, especially at night. In particular, the “cross fox” phase of the Red Fox is very similar to a Gray Fox in colouration (see illustration). The Gray Fox is slightly smaller with shorter legs, a shorter muzzle, and a longer tail. The Gray Fox also has a light gray tail with a darker strip along the top and a distinctive black tip, while the “cross fox” phase of the Red Fox tends to have a more uniformly coloured tail which typically has a white tip (although not always visible or present).



Gray Fox



Red Fox (“cross fox” colour phase)



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Red Fox (typical colour phase)

We encourage residents to become “citizen scientists” and help us to monitor the Gray Fox population in our area:

- Keep an eye out for Gray Foxes near your bird feeders, especially at dawn, dusk, and after dark.
- If you have a trail camera, consider placing a camera near your bird feeders (especially if using sunflower seeds or suet) or at other suitable spots on your property such as along game trails.
- Report your Gray Fox sightings (with photographs if possible) and location details to [thunderbaygrayfox@gmail.com](mailto:thunderbaygrayfox@gmail.com). Observers are also encouraged to report their sightings at [www.inaturalist.ca](http://www.inaturalist.ca).
- If you have seen one in the past, we would also like to hear about that.

This information will help us to better monitor the status of this species in our area and guide future conservation efforts. Thank you for your help.