



North Ayrshire Council
Comhairle Siorrachd Àir a Tuath

Urban Foxes



Background

Traditionally foxes lived in rural habitats, but in recent years foxes are to be found in the wild and in city and town centres. The ability of the fox to live in such diverse areas is due to its opportunistic nature, whereby it can live anywhere there is food and shelter available.

Why Are They a Problem?

- Foxes overturn bins and can rip open plastic refuse bags, spilling the contents.
- Foxes can leave faeces in gardens or disturb flower beds.
- Screaming or barking can cause disturbance at night.

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Fox Facts

- It is wrong to believe that foxes have moved into your town from the countryside. Foxes are born and bred in towns and the town is now a natural home.
- Foxes do not hunt in packs or co-operate in hunting. They are, by nature, solitary animals.
- Foxes seldom attack cats or dogs. In most cases they are smaller than dogs and come off worse in fights with cats.

Disease

The wild fox is not a serious health hazard in Britain, but since it is closely related to the domestic dog, it can carry some of the same diseases as well as fleas, ticks and mites. People, especially children, should avoid contact with fox faeces.

Fox Control

No legislation exists to control foxes apart from special measures which would be put in place if there was a rabies alert. Although landowners are permitted to shoot foxes (provided they have the necessary licences), it is illegal to snare, gas or poison foxes. The Council has no powers to deal with urban foxes.

Fox Prevention

North Ayrshire Council can offer advice but does not offer an eradication service.

- Chemical repellents are available for use against foxes and can be purchased from hardware stores.
- Do not leave food out. This is likely to encourage rats and mice as well as foxes.
- Control the disposal of food waste on compost heaps, ensuring that it is covered, or use an enclosed compost bin.
- Ensure that household waste is properly disposed of and is kept in lidded bins while awaiting collection.