

Living with **Gray and Red Foxes**

General information

Florida has two species of fox, the gray fox and the red fox. The gray fox is a native species and the red fox has expanded its range across Florida and is considered naturalized in the state. While found throughout Florida, the gray fox is more abundant in the northern sections of Florida. These two fox species are similar in size and can be difficult to tell apart.

Gray fox (*Urocyon cinereoargenteus*) has black hair along the middle of the back and the tail is tipped in black, giving the appearance of a black mane. The face, sides, back and tail are gray, while the under parts are white and the sides of the neck and underside of the tail are a rusty-yellow color. The gray fox typically uses dense cover during the daytime and open fields and wooded areas at night. The gray fox, sometimes referred to as the “tree fox,” can scramble up a tree quickly, and is one of the only North American members of the dog family capable of climbing.

The red fox (*Vulpes vulpes*) is red over most of the body and has a white tip on the end of its tail. It is normally found in more open areas during the daytime and uses open fields and wooded areas at night.

Foxes are essentially nocturnal, but they can be seen feeding around dawn and dusk or occasionally during the day. Mice, rats and rabbits are the mainstays of both the gray and red fox diet, although they will consume almost anything edible. Small birds, mammals, reptiles, amphibians, fish, fruits, berries, insects and some carrion serve to supplement their diet. If food is plentiful, red foxes may kill more than they immediately need, and hide the extra in the ground for later. The gray fox is less likely to raid chicken coops, as it prefers to live in wilder, denser brushy cover. Foxes help maintain a balance in the rodent and rabbit populations, and they are also preyed upon themselves by bobcats and dogs. Young foxes may be preyed upon by owls, hawks or coyotes. **Unless an animal is sick or injured, foxes are generally not aggressive toward people.**

What can be done to prevent problems with foxes?

- Secure all possible food sources, including pet food and garbage.
- Do not directly feed foxes or other wildlife. It is illegal to feed foxes in Florida. Even if a fox is not eating the food you put out for birds or other wildlife, feeding stations can concentrate prey species and draw predators to your property.
- Haze any fox that is seen in a community or near homes or livestock. Yell, use air horns or throw rocks towards but not at the fox to discourage the animal from being in an unwelcome place.
- Properly pen small livestock such as chickens and quail in enclosures that cannot be accessed by foxes or other predators. Foxes can jump and dig so enclosures should be completely enclosed or measures taken to prevent foxes from jumping or digging into a pen.
- Do not leave small domestic pets outdoors or on screened enclosures unattended.



Red fox



Gray fox, FWC



See reverse side for additional information.

MyFWC.com

Legal status

Hunting foxes by trapping or shooting is illegal in Florida. For additional details on furbearer hunting visit the FWC website at: MyFWC.com/hunting. A fox can be taken as a nuisance animal if it causes or is about to cause property damage, presents a threat to public safety, or causes an annoyance in, under, or upon a building, per Florida Rule [68A-9.010](#).

Legal options to take nuisance fox

Foxes are beneficial because they control populations of rodents, rabbits and other small animals. It is best to prevent or solve problems with foxes by securing attractants and deterring the animals from becoming comfortable around residences and domestic animals. Removing one or more fox does not prevent others from moving into or using the same areas in the future. However, if a fox is a nuisance the animal can be captured or killed using legal and humane methods.

- Nuisance foxes can be shot on private property during daylight hours with landowner permission. Please check with the local sheriff or police

department before discharging a weapon.

- Cage traps can be used for live-capture of foxes, however it is often difficult to do so.
- Snares can be used to capture fox that have a travel path or are digging under a fence. Remember: snares are not species-specific traps and the trapper is responsible for any animal caught in a snare.
- Padded jaw steel traps can only be used with an FWC issued Steel Trap Permit. These permits are normally issued for situations where there is significant livestock loss or property damage and other alternative options have been tried or are not feasible. Applicants need to apply at the appropriate FWC regional office for this permit.

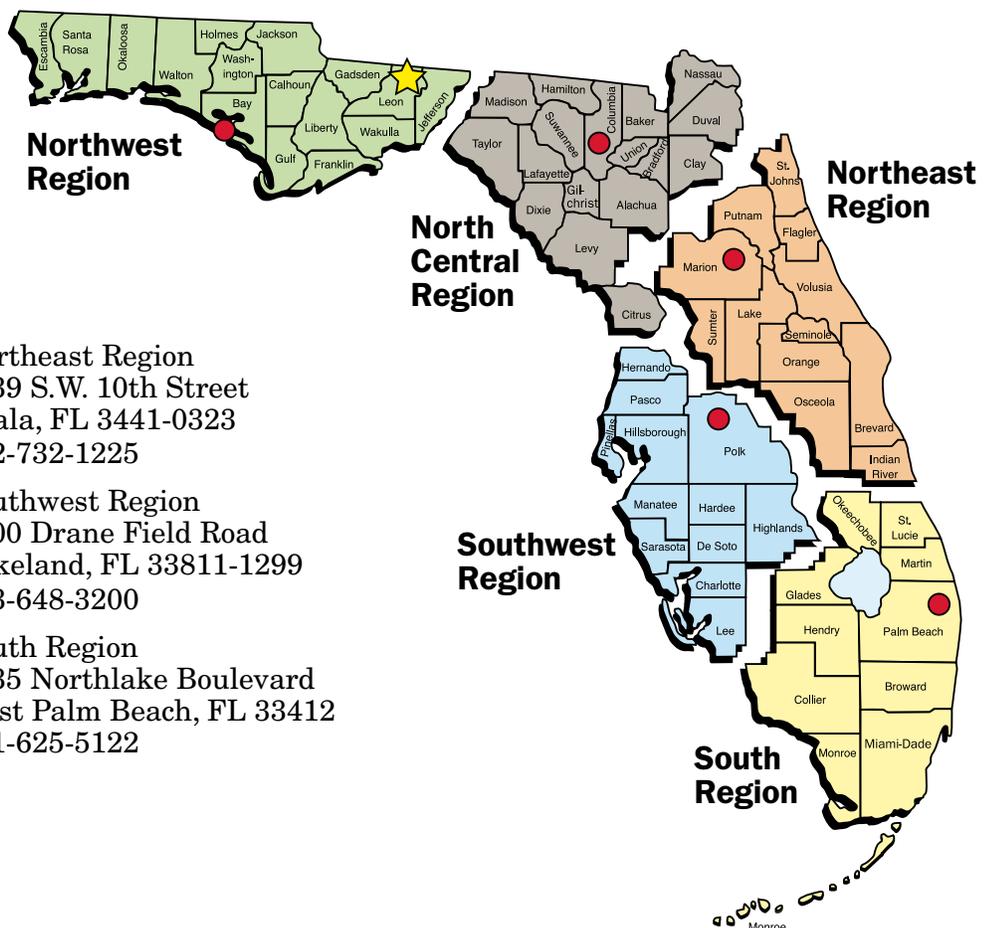


Please note: All traps must be checked at least once every 24 hours. Captured non-target species should be released on site.

If you have further questions or need more help, call your regional Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission office:



Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission Regional Offices



★ MAIN HEADQUARTERS

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