

**From the DPPHOA Environmental Committee:**



### **Point Outlook: Curious Foxes of Fall**

If you've noticed more foxes wandering through our neighborhood in the fall, you're not imagining it. Many of the foxes seen at this time of year are young foxes born in the spring. By autumn, they are the wildlife equivalent of teenagers—full of curiosity, exploring new places, and learning how to live on their own.

Red foxes are intelligent, adaptable mammals found throughout North America. They have excellent hearing, so sharp they can detect a mouse moving beneath several inches of snow. Their long, bushy tails help them balance while running, keep them warm on cold nights, and even serve as a blanket when they curl up to sleep. Foxes can run up to 30 miles per hour and are capable of impressive leaps to catch prey hidden in tall grass.

Although foxes are skilled hunters, they are also opportunistic eaters. Their diet includes mice, voles, rabbits, insects, frogs, berries, fruits, and seeds. By eating large numbers of rodents, foxes provide an important natural form of pest control that benefits farms, gardens, and forests.

Young foxes often investigate unfamiliar sights, sounds, and smells, which is why they may seem unusually bold in the fall. They might pause to watch people or pets from a distance before quietly moving on. This curiosity is a normal part of learning about their world, not a sign of aggression.

Foxes are naturally wary of people and almost always avoid close contact. Healthy foxes do not seek out humans, and they very rarely pose a threat to pets. Foxes prefer wild prey and would rather slip away than start a confrontation.

The best response when you see a fox is simply to enjoy the moment. Observe quietly from a distance, avoid feeding it, and allow it to continue on its way. Feeding wild foxes can cause them to lose their natural caution around people and is not good for their health.

A glimpse of a fox in the crisp autumn air is a reminder that wildlife shares our communities. By giving these beautiful, curious animals the space they need, we can appreciate one of nature's most clever and fascinating neighbors.