GENUS VULPES.—Cuv.

DENTAL FORMULA.

\[ \text{Incisive } \frac{6}{6}; \text{ Canine } \frac{1-1}{1-1}; \text{ Molar } \frac{6-6}{7-7} = 42. \]

Muzzle pointed; pupils of the eyes forming a vertical fissure; upper incisors less curved than in the Genus Canis. Tail long, bushy, and cylindrical.

Animals of this genus generally are smaller, and the number of species known greater, than among the wolves; they diffuse a fetid odour, dig burrows, and attack none but the weaker quadrupeds or birds, &c.

The characters of this genus differ so slightly from those of the genus Canis, that we were induced to pause before removing it from the subgenus in which it had so long remained. As a general rule, we are obliged to admit that a large fox is a wolf, and a small wolf may be termed a fox. So inconveniently large, however, is the list of species in the old genus Canis, that it is, we think, advisable to separate into distinct groups, such species as possess any characters different from the true Wolves.

Foxes, although occasionally seen abroad during the day, are nocturnal in their habits, and their character is marked by timidity, suspicion and cunning. Nearly the whole day is passed by the Fox in concealment, either in his burrow under ground, in the fissures of the rocks, or in the middle of some large fallen-tree-top, or thick pile of brush-wood, where he is well hidden from any passing enemy.

During the obscurity of late twilight, or in the darkness of night, he sallies forth in search of food; the acuteness of his organs of sight, of smell, and of hearing, enabling him in the most murky atmosphere to trace and follow the footsteps of small quadrupeds or birds, and pounce upon the hare seated in her form, or the partridge, grouse, or turkey on their nests.

Various species of squirrels, field-rats, and moles, afford him a rich repast. He often causes great devastation in the poultry yard; seizes on the goose whilst grazing along the banks of the stream, or carries off the lamb from the side of its mother.

The cautious and wary character of the Fox, renders it exceedingly
In our youth we had opportunities whilst residing in the northern part of the State of New York, of acquiring some knowledge of the habits of fox and many other animals, which then were abundant around us. Within a few miles dwelt several neighbours who vied with each other in destroying foxes and other predatory animals, and who kept a strict account of the number they captured or killed each season. As trappers, most of our neighbours were rather unsuccessful—especially, the wary foxes, as our western hunters would say, seemed very soon, to be "up to trap." Shooting them by star-light from behind a hay-stack in the fields, when they had for some time been baited and the snow covered the ground so that food was eagerly sought after by them, answered pretty well at first, but after a few had been shot at, the whole tribe of foxes—red, tawny, cross, and black—appeared to be aware that safety was no longer to be expected in the vicinity of hay-stacks, and they all gave the latter a wide berth.

With the assistance of dogs, pick-axes, and spades, our friends were far more successful, and we think might have been considered adepts. We were invited to join them, which we did on a few occasions, but finding that our ideas of sport did not accord precisely with theirs, we gracefully withdrew from this club of primitive fox-hunters. Each of these sportsmen was guided by his own "rules and regulations" in the "chase." The horse was not brought into the field, nor do we remember any scarlet coats. Each hunter proceeded in the direction that to him seemed best—what he killed he kept—and he always took the shortest possible method he could devise, to obtain the fox's skin. He seldom carried a gun, but in lieu of it, on his shoulder was a pick-axe and a spade and in his pocket a tinder box and steel.

A half-hound, being a stronger and swifter dog than the thoroughbred, accompanied him, the true foxhound being too slow and too noisy for his purpose; we remember one of these half-bred dogs which was of great size and extraordinary fleetness; it was said to have a cross of the greyhound. In the fresh-fallen and deep snows of mid-winter, the hunters were most successful. During these severe snow storms, the ruffed grouse, (Tetrao uiiiriniiix,) called in our Eastern States the partridge, is often snowed up and covered over; or sometimes plunges from on wing into the soft snow, where it remains concealed for a day or two. The fox occasionally surprises these birds, and as he is usually stimulated at this inclement season by the gnawings of hunger, he is compelled to seek or food by day as
A. KHICAX CROSS FOX.

well as by night; his fresh tracks may be seen in the fields, along the fences, and on the slivers of the farm-yard, as well as in the deep forest. Nothing is easier than to track the Fox under these favourable circumstances, and the trail having been discovered, it is followed up, until Reynard is started. Now the chase begins: the half-hound yells out, in tones far removed from the mellow notes of the thoroughbred dog, but equally inspiring perhaps, through the clear frosty air, as the solitary hunter eagerly follows as fast as his limited powers of locomotion will admit.

At intervals of three or four minutes, the sharp cry of the dog resounds, the Fox has no time to double and shuffle, the dog is at his heels almost, and speed, speed, is his only hope for life. Now the shrill baying of the hound becomes irregular; we may fancy he is at the throat of his victim; the hunter is far in the rear, toiling along the track which marks the course so well contested, but occasionally the voice of his dog, softened by the distance, is borne on the wind to his ear. For a mile or two the Fox keeps ahead of his pursuer, but the latter has the longest legs, and the snow impedes him less than it does poor Reynard; every bound and plunge into the snow diminishes the distance between the fox and his relentless foe. Onward they rush through field, fence, brushwood, and open forest, the snow flying from bush and briar as they dart through the copse or speed across the newly-cleared field. But this desperate race cannot last longer. The fox must gain his burrow, or some cavernous rock, or he dies. Alas! he has been lured too far away from his customary haunts and from his secure retreat, in search of prey; he is unable to reach his home; the dog is even now within a foot of his brush. One more desperate leap, and with a sudden snappish growl he turns upon his pursuer and endeavours to defend himself with his sharp teeth. For a moment he resists the dog, but is almost instantly overcome. He is not killed, however, in the first onset; both dog and fox are so fatigued that they now sit on their haunches facing each other, resting, panting, their tongues hanging out, and the foam from their lips dropping on the snow. After fiercely eyeing each other for a while, both become impatient—the former to seize his prey, and the latter to escape. At the first leap of the fox, the dog is upon him; with renewed vigour he seizes him by the throat, and does not lose his hold until the snow is stained with his blood, and he lies rumpled, draggled, with blood-shot eye and frothy open mouth, a mangled carcass on the ground.

The hunter soon comes up: he has made several short cuts, guided by the baying of his hound; and striking the deep trail in the snow again, at a point much nearer to the scene of the death-struggle, he hurries toward the place where the last cry was heard, and pushes forward in a half run.
difficult to take him in a trap of any kind. He eludes the snares laid for him, and generally discovers and avoids the steel-trap, however carefully covered with brush-wood or grasses.

In the Northern States, such as Pennsylvania and New-York, and in New England, the rutting season of the Fox commences in the month of February. During this period he issues a succession of rapid yells, like the quick and sharp barking of a small dog. Gestation continues from 60 to 65 days. The cubs are from 5 to 9 in number, and like young puppies, are born with hair and are blind at birth. They leave their burrows generally when three or four months old, and in all predatory expeditions each individual goes singly, and plunders on his own account, and for his own especial benefit.

The Generic name is derived from the Latin word *vulpes*, a Fox.

There are about twelve well-known species belonging to this genus—four of which exist in North America.

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**VULPES FULVUS. — Desm: var. Decussatus. — Pennant.**

**American Cross Fox.**

**PLATE VI.—Male.**

V. euru nigra supra humeros, subtus linea longitudinali nigra, auribus pedibusque nigris.

**Characters.**

_A cross on the neck and shoulders, and a longitudinal stripe on the under surface, black; ears and feet black._

**Synonymes.**

Renard Barre, Tsinantontongue, Sagard Theodat., Canada, p 745.
European Cross Fox, var. B., Cross Fox, Pennant, Aret., Zool., vol. i., p. 46.
Canis Decussatus, Geoff., Coll. du Mus.
Canis Fulvus, Sabine, Franklin’s Journal, p. 656.


**Description.**

Form, agrees in every particular with that of the common red fox, (_V. fulvus_). Fur, rather thick and long, but not thicker or more elongated than in many specimens of the red fox that we have examined. Soles of

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