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 fœtid 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 sub-genus 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

Drawn on Stone by R. Tremblay

American Grass Field

Drawn from Nature by J. J. Audubon F.R.S. F.L.S.

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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.

VULPES FULVUS.—DESM: *var. Decussatus*.—PENNANT.

AMERICAN CROSS FOX.

PLATE VI.—MALE.

V. cruce 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 BARRÉ, Tsinantontongue, Sagard Theodat., Canada, p. 745.

EUROPEAN CROSS FOX, var. B., Cross Fox, Pennant, Arct., Zool., vol. i., p. 46.

CANIS DECUSSATUS, Geoff., Coll. du Mus.

CANIS FULVUS, Sabine, Franklin's Journal, p. 656.

“ “ var. B., (decussatus) Rich., Fauna Boreali Americana, p. 93.

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

Audubon, John James and Bachman, John. 1851. "Genus Vulpes — Cuv." *The quadrupeds of North America* 1, 44–45. <https://doi.org/10.5962/p.322454>.

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