

Fox Information Sheet

PCD32 - April 2011



Introduction

Kirklees like most councils has a policy on foxes based on humane deterrence. Foxes are not vermin and the council is under no legal obligation to control them. Some people think they are a pest, but the fox is native wildlife and is protected from cruelty under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and the Wild Mammals (Protection) Act 1996. Poisoning and gassing foxes is illegal and people caught doing this can be fined up to £5,000.

The fox has lived in our urban environment for a long time and many people get pleasure from foxes and other urban wildlife and they provide a valuable educational opportunity for children to see nature at close hand. For those who think foxes are a nuisance, humane deterrents can be used.

Myth or Fact?

Myth - Foxes are a danger to pets like cats.

Fact - Cats and foxes exist in large numbers in urban areas and meet regularly, particularly at night, without incident. Foxes may kill other animals such as pet rabbits, guinea pigs and birds because they form a natural part of their diet, but secure housing for pets can prevent this.

Myth - The fox is a health hazard to people.

Fact - Foxes are not aggressive to people and will generally try and avoid contact. They may appear bold, but this is merely inquisitiveness and familiarity with people in urban environments, not aggression.

Myth - Foxes can spread disease such as Canine Mange, Toxicariasis and Rabies.

Fact - Foxes can suffer from Canine Mange which is caused by a mite that can be transferred to dogs by contact with an infected animal, but the risk is low due to lack of close contact. Toxicariasis is an infection caused by a parasite roundworm found in the intestine of some canines and cats. There has never been a proven case of Toxicariasis being passed to a human by a fox. Foxes, like dogs can carry Rabies. Fortunately Britain is Rabies free and therefore Rabies poses no actual threat to people or animals.

Myth - The fox population is growing out of control

Fact - Only around 30% of the more dominant fox population breeds each year and only about 25% of cubs live to breeding age. The average life expectancy of the urban fox is under two years. 70% of the total fox population would need to be killed to cause a reduction in the breeding population of the area. The fox populations remain stable and self-regulatory according to the amount of food and habitat and are not increasing.

Myth - Foxes cause litter

Fact - Like cats and dogs, foxes will scavenge from our household rubbish. Storing and containing your rubbish properly is your responsibility. This will prevent animals getting to it.

How Can I Deter Foxes?

Foxes are territorial and scent their patch with urine and faeces. The use of chemical (smell) deterrents can be effective in deterring foxes from gardens and other areas. You can purchase these from garden centres, DIY or hardware stores. You should follow the instructions carefully when using these.

Further Information

Kirklees Environmental Protection Tel: 01484 226891
Email: pest.control@kirklees.gov.uk

Urban Fox Deterrence Advice Line Tel: 01892 514863
The National Fox Welfare Society Tel: 01933 411996
Go to: www.nfws.org.uk

The RSPCA Tel: 9870 555 5999

Go to: www.rspca.org.uk

The Fox Project (Charity) Go to: www.foxproject.org.uk

