



# SIONNACH

## FOX

*Vulpes vulpes*

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The little stars on this map represent the distribution of Foxes throughout Ireland. Each square on the map is equivalent to 100 kilometres by 100 kilometres.

The Fox has been with us for a long, long time. Throughout the years, he has been hunted by man, but, because he is an intelligent animal, he has been able to survive all the trapping, hunting and shooting. The fox is still very common all over this country. You may not have seen these handsome animals because they usually spend the daylight hours sleeping, only coming out to hunt when it gets dark. The fox has a thick red-brown coat with white underparts and a long white-tipped tail or brush. He and the female fox (a vixen) live in an 'earth' or underground burrow. Sometimes they

occupy a badger's 'sett' or a rabbit's burrow. The badger's neat home is soon turned into a bit of a mess by the untidy fox family! In April, three to six cubs are born. Foxes are very good parents. Unlike some other wild animals, the dog-fox is an excellent father. He provides food for the vixen and her cubs and helps his mate to rear the family. The cubs begin to leave home in the late summer. They soon go their own separate ways, for foxes are solitary animals and prefer to be on their own. Foxes do a very important job of controlling the numbers of pests like rats and mice.

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