



The Maine gray fox is in a class all its own



DNA testing reveals the Maine gray fox is likely the oldest fox species in the world—more than ten million years old.



Like a cat, its nails are retractable, making it the only member of the canid (dog) family in North America that can easily climb trees (red foxes climb, but not as well as grays) and jump from branch to branch.



Their sharp claws give them the ability to climb as high as fifty to sixty feet, aided by forearms that can be rotated.



The gray fox keeps a lifelong companion and provides food and care for their young pups for up to three months. The young pups open their eyes at ten days and will venture out of the den after about four weeks.



Most are found in the southern and mid-coast of Maine and don't mind living near people, but tend to make a home in a mix of forest and fields near fresh water.



Foxes gain nourishment from a wide range of plants and animals, which includes mice, rabbits, snakes, eggs, fruit, berries, and insects. Some will even climb into a bird feeder to eat birdseed.



The Maine gray fox weighs about ten pounds and is distinguished by its grizzled coloration; a hint of red on the neck, ears, and lower legs; and a black stripe down its tail.

Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife

maine.gov/ifw/fish-wildlife/wildlife/species-information/mammals/foxes.html

Natural Resources Council of Maine (NRCM)

nrcm.org/blog/critter-chatter/gray-fox-class-of-its-own/

Photos provided by Kendra Mathews