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# Red Fox: The Catlike Canine (Smithsonian Nature Book)



## Synopsis

In this engaging introduction to the red fox (*Vulpes vulpes*), J. David Henry recounts his years of field research on this flame-colored predator. With its catlike whiskers, teeth, and paws, as well as vertical-slit pupils, the North American red fox not only resembles but often behaves like a feline, especially when hunting. Probing the reasons for these similarities, Henry reveals the behavior and ecology of a species that thrives from the edge of suburbia to the cold northern tundra.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

“Grace and elegance mark the fox. In a way, both adjectives could be used for this book as well.”  
—[Newsday](#)

J. DAVID HENRY is a biologist who spent six years studying red foxes in Canada.

"Red Fox: The Catlike Canine" by J. David Henry First off, this book is a gem if for no other reason than that Red Foxes are such fascinating creatures. Henry is an ethologist - a scientist who studies animal behaviors and his book bears that imprint. A goodly amount of text is devoted to his methodologies and conjectures - all things that would interest other scientists and advanced amateur Nature students. HOWEVER.... Any animal lover, Nature-watcher, or just plain curious person will probably find this book interesting in spite of having to wade through a bit scientific mud once in a while. It is a classic illustration of how Nature and wildlife should be approached and

studied so the student can actually understand the "what" and "why" of the things they see. Not that the Nature buff needs all the math and discipline, not at all. It is the "way of seeing" demonstrated in this book that will reward the Nature-watcher with the intimate knowledge of, and connection to, whatever their chosen subject is. Red Foxes, like all the rest of Nature, are a sort of jig-saw puzzle. If you can find the Logic and put it together you are rewarded with a splendid picture. This book gives the reader a tantalizing glimpse of just how it is done.

Although this is an older book, I would recommend it as a good basic overview of the biology and ethnology of the red fox.

I'm so pleased I found this book! Ever since I saw a fox carrying a bird in its mouth across my lawn I've wanted to learn more about these elusive animals. The only books I could find in the library were written for children, so they were only about a dozen pages. This book is full of behavioral research and gave me a good insight into a fox's mind. There are also many pictures, a few of them in beautiful color. It does get a little technical at times (especially in a section describing an experiment to learn more about food caching behavior). This is not a field guide (for example, I wouldn't use it to try and identify what kind of fox has claimed my yard as its territory). As the title suggests, it's specific research conducted on the Red Fox and it's for people like me that want to learn as much as possible about a little-understood creature.

This book is a reprint of an older book with an update in the preface. It is a rare look into the life of the red fox. The author writes about his experiences studying these fox in a humorous and very empathic way. I enjoyed this book and would highly recommend it for anyone interested in the red fox one finds all around us.

I am convinced that J. David Henry knows more about red foxes than any other human. And if you have an almost religious fascination with foxes, Henry is your prophet. He is obviously charmed by these creatures and is willing to pursue every facet of their behavior to discover the reason for it. This wonderful book is the product of many years of research, from both his own personal field experience and the borrowed experience of other biologists. Fortunately for the reader, Henry is also a gifted storyteller. If his goal was to make red foxes relatable and relevant to our own lives, then he succeeded. In this revised edition of the book, there are eight pages of color photographs of red foxes. Further, the scientific evidence gathered by the author suggests that red foxes migrated

into North America long before Europeans settled it. For more fox facts, read this book.

I'm an animal artist, painting from photographs. There is just not enough information in the beautiful photograph I am using of a young fox to accurately depict its coat color. Information in the book allowed me to figure out how old the fox is (about 2 months) and to validate the confusion I was seeing in the coat color portrayed in the Photo. Grey, dun and red. Changing from dun to gray and beginning to turn red. Amazing! A great little book if you are interested in foxes. It has given me enough information to write a paragraph about this particular fox, which was photographed by a friend not far from my house.

If you are interested in foxes, mammals, or just animals in general, you will enjoy this book. It is both a novel you can read cover to cover, yet still a reference piece. This book is NOT a dry field report, nor is it a dumbed-down piece written for pure entertainment - this is a book to expand your understanding of foxes and animals in general. As others have pointed out, the illustrations and photos are black & white (save some color ones at the front). This does not detract from the book, as they get the job done and you can find thousands of fox pictures online for free.

Well written, accessible journal-like book of field observations of foxes in the wild. Hard to find this kind of information elsewhere. Not over-burdened with methodology, just enough. Fine read for anyone captivated by the red fox.

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