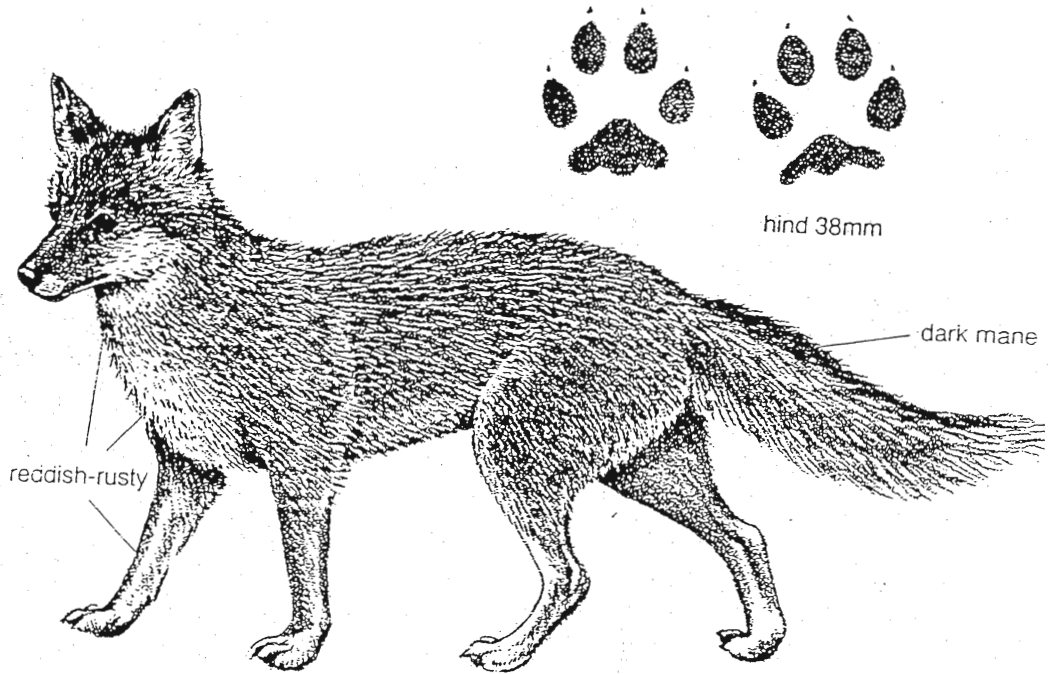


Gray Fox



This attractive, secretive animal is the only American fox that can climb trees, it has sharp, curved claws and catlike agility. It forages in trees, takes refuge in them, and has been known to make its den high up in a hollow tree. The usual choice, though, is a hollow log or rocky crevice, which it uses year round for shelter and safety. The gray fox does not dig a den like other foxes.

The gray fox is not completely nocturnal, it likes to hunt at night when rodents are active but also forages during the daylight hours. It hunts over a wide area but likes to keep to well known paths. It is a fast runner, able to reach 28 mph for short distances, but it usually hunts by sneaking up on its prey, or lying in wait, then pouncing, more like a cat than a member of the dog family. It can turn quickly on its flat rudder-like tail to easily catch gophers, mice, ground squirrels, and rabbits. It also hunts frogs, reptiles, and birds. Plant life forms quite a large part of its diet, it enjoys berries, fruits, and nuts.

The mating season is in February and March and the young are born in March and April. There are usually two to four pups in a litter. The male fox takes some part in rearing the babies, bringing small prey home for them to eat, but he does not den with the family. The young are weaned at three months and are usually hunting for themselves at four months.

The barks and yips of the gray fox sound rather like a small dog but it makes other sounds so strange one would never guess that a fox was making them.

Gray Fox (*Urocyon cinereogentus*)