Fennec Fox  
*Fennecus zerda*

**Range:** Sahara region of North Africa and the Arabian Peninsula.  
**Habitat:** Arid desert regions.  
**Size:** Body Length: 14-16 in; Tail Length: 8 in; Weight: 3.3 lbs.  
**Young:** 2-5 kits.  
**Gestation:** 50-51 days.  
**Diet (wild):** Plants, small rodents, birds, eggs, lizards, and insects.  
**Diet (zoo):** Carnivore diet, kibble, worms, fruits and vegetables, and vitamin supplements.  

**Lifespan (in the wild):** About 8 years in wild.  
**Lifespan (in captivity):** 10 to 12 years  

**Status:** This species is not currently listed as endangered, but trade is regulated in some countries. The Fennec fox is intensively hunted by native Saharan people and have become rare in some parts of northwest Africa. Protected under CITES.  

**Threats:** Hunting by man.  

**Anatomy/Physiology:** They are a small canine with a sandy color coat, which provides camouflage and protection from cold desert nights. They have huge ears that are used to radiate heat from the body and keep them cool. Their feet have hairy soles to protect them from the hot sand.  

**Social/Family units:** They are social animals and may share an extensive burrow system with up to 12 other individuals.  

**Habits:** Males mark territory with urine. They also may store surplus food in a burrow and dig it up later to eat.  

**Communication:** High pitched yelp, low quite growl.  

**Defensive/Aggressive behavior:** They are fierce predators; they may hide in burrows to escape predators.  

**Prey items:** Plants, small rodents, birds, eggs, lizards, and insects, can also take down larger mammals such as gerbils and desert hares.  

**Predators:** Vultures, hyenas, and jackals.  

**Locomotion:** Quadruped with feet adapted to walking on hot sand.  

**Activity:** They are nocturnal. They hide from heat in sand burrows during the day.  

**Interesting story/facts:** It is the smallest of all foxes and has the largest relative ears. It also seems to be completely independent of the need to drink.