

# GUIDE TO FOX CUBS

1. Foxes only mate once a year in the winter months. The gestation time (or the length of the pregnancy) is 49–58 days, and the average litter size is 4 cubs.
2. The cubs are born blind, deaf, toothless and naked. They then grow a fluffy brown fur, which turns their distinctive red at 3 months. At birth a tiny cub weighs 50-150 grams.
3. For the first few weeks the cubs do not leave the den and are completely dependent on their mother's warmth and milk. After a month the cubs will first emerge from the earth and will start eating solid food.
4. Rearing fox cubs is a family affair. As well as the mother and father, older siblings and other family members bring the cubs food and help to rear them.
5. Once the cubs are around two months old, their mother will often leave them for extended periods to wean them, but she usually returns to check on the cubs and bring them food. If you see cubs by themselves, observe rather than picking them up, assuming they have been abandoned.
6. Just because a vixen has not been seen in a while, does not mean that the cubs have been abandoned. If anything were to happen to the cubs' parents, they will often be brought up by other family members.
7. Cubs play-fight to learn hunting and fighting skills, but also to establish a hierarchy of dominance. By the time they are around two months old, that hierarchy is usually firmly in place.
8. Fox cubs live with their parents until they are about 7 months old. After this they will head off to make their own way in the world. Usually the female juvenile foxes will stay near their birthing place whereas the male foxes are known to venture further to find their own territory.
9. Some fox siblings form alliances and venture out into the world together with the more dominant juvenile fox looking out for the less mature and confident sibling.
10. Sadly only one in five fox cubs will reach their first birthday and make it into adulthood.



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