

RED FOX

The red fox occurs in three main colour phases: red, cross, and silver. In the red phase, the most common, the colour varies from a light yellowish red (Pale, Extra Pale) to a deep auburn red (Dark).

The cross fox, the next most common, derives its name from a distinct dark cross in the dorsal hair at the shoulders, the long axis of which extends down the back. The background colour of the cross fox is more brownish than red, ranging from reddish to reddish brown with varying amounts of grizzling. In all shades it is darker than the red fox.

An interesting mutation affects pelt quality. Known as the “Samson,” this mutant lacks the normal long guard hairs and has only short underfur, giving it a woolly appearance. The Samson is often a dark sooty gray colour and in life has a scruffy appearance because its fur is usually matted.

Red foxes have a single annual molt that begins in early spring and proceeds gradually over the summer. In fall the underfur becomes more dense and the guard hairs attain their full length. Red fox pelts are fully prime by late November or early December and may remain prime until mid-February. However, late in the season, red foxes tend to become rubbed.

SECTIONS

The two sections for Red Fox are Eastern and Western, using the Manitoba-Ontario border in Canada and Minnesota as the dividing line in the United States.

Eastern: This section has dark colours, even nap with a silky texture and heavy underfur.

Western: This section is paler in colour with a long, uneven nap, silky texture and less dense underfur.

Pelts from the Northern regions of both sections are large in size and heavy in weight. Foxes from the Central area are lighter in weight and pelts from the Southern areas are flat.

SIZE

Red foxes are sized by length of the pelt from the snout to the base of the tail.

XL-L	Over 71 cm	Over 28"
M-SM	Under 71 cm	Under 28"

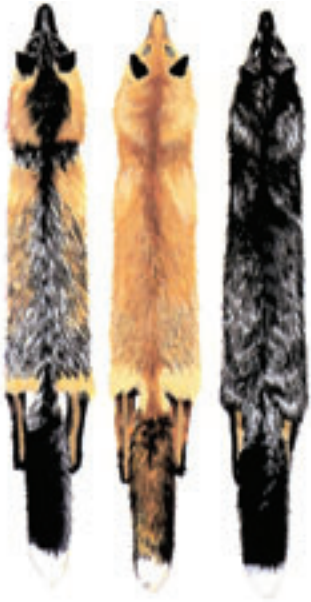
COLOUR

Red fox pelts are sorted into different colours, primarily using the colour differences in the tips of both the underfur and the guard hairs.

Extra Dark: These pelts have a very bright dark “cherry” red colour.

Dark Red: Pelts in this category are darker and redder than other pelts. They have a red dorsal stripe that extends all the way to the tail. Very bright pelts are sometimes referred to as “Cherry Red”.

Medium: These pelts are paler than Darks. The dorsal red stripe extends only to the hips and tends to fade in intensity as it reaches the hips. The flanks are blonder (less red) than those of Darks.



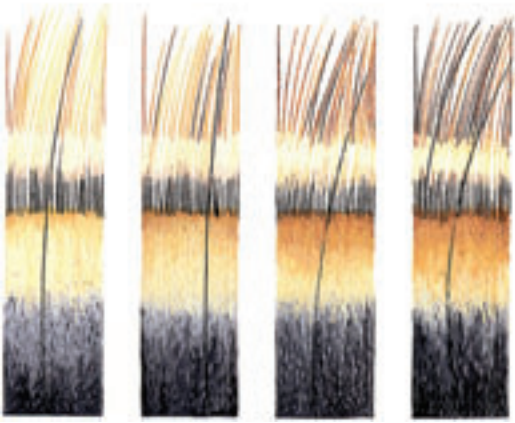
(a) cross (b) red (c) silver

COMMON COLOUR PHASES OF THE RED FOX

Pale: These pelts are paler all over than Dark and Medium colours. The dorsal stripe is not very pronounced. Some Eastern section Pale pelts have significant numbers of silver-tipped guard hairs on the rump. These pelts are referred to as “Gray Butts”.

Extra Pale: These pelts are yellowish all over and the dorsal stripe is indistinct. This colour is rare in northern and eastern sections. These pelts are mostly from Western sections.

Bastard: These appear to be pale cross foxes, but they have a red stripe down the centre of the back instead of a black stripe. The underfur of the bastard fox has reddish tips. The snout is not solid black like the cross fox’s but is a mixture of red and black. The dorsal stripe of bastard foxes is variable in width, and pelts are often sorted into wide-stripe and narrow-stripe categories.



(a) pale (b) medium (c) dark (d) extra dark

**COLOUR CATEGORIES OF THE RED FOX
TOP: WHOLE PELTS | BOTTOM: CROSS SECTIONS OF FUR**

WEIGHTS

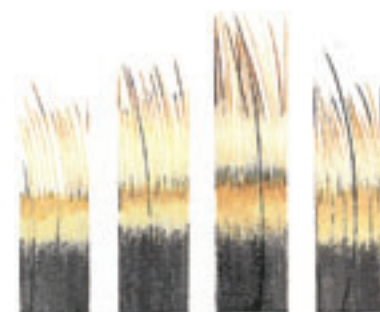
CODE	WEIGHTS	DEFINITION
HVY	HEAVY	Very deep underwool. Long Nap types.
AVG	AVERAGE	Medium depth of underwool. Medium Nap types.
FL	FLAT	Short underwool. Short Nap types.
XFL	EXTRA FLAT	Very flat underwool. Mainly guard hair.

CATALOGUE SECTION I

CODE	GRADE	DEFINITION
SEL	SELECT	Best possible quality. Full bodied, fully covered skins. Free of imperfections.
I	FIRST	Very good quality. Fully covered skins except for very slight weakness on the flanks (guard hair weakness). Free of imperfections.
I-II	FIRST AND SECOND	Very visible lack of guard hair coverage on the flank and back. Lacking density of underwool.
II	SECOND	Very weak open flanks and back. Very loose underwool.
SDG	SLIGHT DAMAGED	SDG (Gd.): SEL or I quality skins that are up to 10% damaged. SDG (Av.): I-II and II quality skins that are up to 10% damaged.

CATALOGUE SECTION III

CODE	GRADE	DEFINITION
DGD	DAMAGED	DGD (Gd.): SEL or I quality skins that are up to 25% damaged. DGD (Pr.): I-II and II quality skins that are up to 25% damaged. I quality skins that are up to 50% damaged
III / IV	FOURTH	Badly rubbed, woolly. Summer skins. Very limited commercial value.



(a) early (b) coming on to prime (c) prime (d) late

PRIMING SEQUENCE OF THE RED FOX
TOP: WHOLE PELTS
BOTTOM: CROSS-SECTIONS OF FUR