BLACK FOXES UK FOX GENOMICS SOP

Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)
Role: Fox Genomics Coordinator (Part-Time, 3 hours/week)
Objective: To develop and maintain systems for monitoring and recording phenotypic traits in the UK fox population, and assist in planning future genetic studies. The role aims to ensure data collection is accurate, relevant, and contributes to fox conservation efforts.

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1. Overview of Responsibilities

Weekly Tasks (spread over 3 hours):

- Develop systems to monitor and record phenotypic traits in foxes.
- Create plans for potential future genetic studies, including data collection and sample analysis.
- Collaborate with wildlife conservation teams and specialists to share data and best practices.
- Keep up with the latest scientific research and incorporate findings into ongoing projects.
- Ensure accurate and organised documentation of findings and data.

Weekly Goal: Establish a reliable system to monitor phenotypes, and provide input for genetic study planning.

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2. Tools and Resources

Platforms:

- Google Sheets or Excel (for data recording and organisation).
- Online research databases (e.g., Google Scholar, PubMed) to track relevant scientific literature.

Tools:

- Data Management: Google Sheets or Excel.

- Communication: Email, Zoom, or Slack for coordination with conservation teams.
- Research: Online databases for genetic and phenotypic research on foxes.

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3. Phenotype Monitoring and Data Collection

A. Phenotypic Traits

- **Frequency**: Ongoing data entry and monitoring, with weekly updates.
- **Content**:
    - Record key traits such as fur colour, size, behaviour, and regional distribution of foxes.
    - Include any abnormal or unique traits that may warrant further genetic study.

Process:

- Establish a clear system for recording phenotypic traits.
- Cross-reference collected data with existing studies to ensure consistency.
- Share data with team members through Google Sheets or Excel.

B. Genetic Study Planning

- **Frequency**: Weekly review and brainstorming for future studies.
- **Content**:
    - Develop ideas for future studies, focusing on sample collection and analysis of genetic markers.
    - Identify areas where phenotypic traits may indicate significant genetic variations.

Process:

- Use the phenotypic data to inform potential study areas.
- Prepare preliminary plans and timelines for genetic research projects.

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4. Collaboration and Best Practices

A. Collaboration with Wildlife Teams

- **Frequency**: Weekly check-ins or meetings as required.
- **Content**:
    - Share collected phenotypic data with wildlife conservation teams.
    - Ensure that data collection methods are aligned with the latest best practices.

Process:

- Communicate regularly with conservation teams through email or online platforms.
- Stay updated on new techniques or technologies in phenotypic and genetic monitoring.

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5. Staying Informed on Research

Frequency: 30 minutes per week (dedicated to research).
Tasks:

- Review recent papers, studies, and articles on wildlife genetics and phenotypes.
- Track developments in genetic technologies that could benefit fox population studies.

Process:

- Bookmark and read articles on databases like PubMed or Google Scholar.
- Integrate any new relevant findings into the data collection and research planning process.

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6. Data Organisation and Reporting

Frequency: 15-20 minutes per week (end of the week).
Tasks:

- Ensure that all collected data is organised and up-to-date in the designated platform.
- Prepare brief reports on data collected and progress made on study planning.

Process:

- Review data collected during the week and ensure accuracy.
- Compile a summary of key findings and any new insights that may influence future studies.

7. Workflow Breakdown (for 3 Hours/Week)

- **Monday (1 hour)**:
    - Update phenotypic records and monitor new data.
    - Plan for the next round of genetic study ideas.
    - Collaborate with team members (e.g., via email or meetings).
- **Wednesday (1 hour)**:
    - Conduct research on recent studies or papers related to wildlife genetics.
    - Update plans for potential future genetic studies based on new findings.
    - Engage with wildlife teams for feedback on phenotypic monitoring.
- **Friday (1 hour)**:
    - Organise and review collected data.
    - Prepare a brief report summarising the week's progress.
    - Plan tasks for the following week.

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8. Continuous Improvement

- **Monitor Trends**: Stay updated on new methods in phenotyping and genetic research that can enhance the system's efficiency.
- **Test New Ideas**: Propose and trial new data collection strategies or study frameworks to improve the quality and scope of research.

Approval & Sign-Off

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