

# BLACK FOXES UK – ESCAPEE SOP

## Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)

**Objective:** To provide guidelines for locating and capturing a lost fox safely and effectively.

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### 1. Immediate Actions

- **Notify Your GP:** Contact your GP and schedule an emergency appointment if bites occur.
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### 2. Locating a Lost Fox

If a fox escapes, the use of a GPS tracking device can greatly assist in its recovery. If a GPS device is not available, follow these steps:

- 1. Coordinate Searches:**
  - Gather family and friends for a search, ideally at dawn (around 4-5 am) for better visibility and quietness.
- 2. Inform Neighbours:**
  - Visit neighbours to inform them of the lost fox, providing your contact details. Ask them to check sheds and secure small pets.
- 3. Distribute Flyers:**
  - Create and post flyers in the local area with details and your contact information.
- 4. Contact Local Authorities:**
  - Inform the local police, animal warden, veterinarians, and wildlife centres.
- 5. Engage Animal Organisations:**
  - Reach out to organisations like Black Foxes UK, Animal Search UK, the National Pet Register, and Dog Lost for wider awareness.
- 6. Utilise Media:**
  - Contact local radio stations and media outlets to spread the word.
- 7. Search for Signs:**
  - Look for tracks or signs of the fox and set traps with familiar scents.
- 8. Notify Assistants:**
  - Once the fox is found, update everyone who assisted in the search.

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### 3. Preparing for Capture

**Before attempting to capture the fox, ensure the following:**

- **Lighting:** Ensure sufficient light for visibility.
- **Avoid Busy Roads:** Do not approach near busy traffic.
- **Equipment:** Have necessary capture equipment and a suitable transport container ready.
- **Clothing and PPE:** Wear appropriate protective clothing.
- **Remove Hazards:** Clear the area of other animals and people.
- **Block Escape Routes:** Ensure escape routes are covered.
- **Approach Quietly:** Move slowly and avoid sudden movements or loud noises.
- **Maintain Visual Contact:** Avoid direct eye contact while keeping the fox in sight.
- **Minimal Restraint:** Use the least coercion necessary during the approach.
- **Consult a Vet:** If the fox is trapped, seek veterinary advice before attempting to capture.

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### 4. Techniques for Capturing a Fox

Choose a suitable method based on the situation:

**1. Box Capture:**

- Personnel: Minimum of 3 people (preferably 6).
- Setup: Position the crate behind the fox and use herding boards to funnel the fox into the crate.

**2. Net Capture:**

- Personnel: Minimum of 2 people.
- Setup: One person nets the fox while another herds it towards them.

**3. Catch-Pole Capture:**

- Personnel: 1 person preferred; 2 is better.
- Setup: Use a catch-pole to secure the fox's head, then maneuver it into a crate.

**4. Trap Capture:**

- Setup: Set traps in secluded areas, baiting them gradually until the fox is comfortable entering.

## 5. Handling a Fractious Fox

- **Scruffing:**
    - Grasp the loose skin on the back of the neck to control the fox. Do not scruff if the fox has neck or head injuries; seek veterinary advice.
  - **Muzzling:**
    - Use gauze or a nylon muzzle to prevent bites during handling. Secure the muzzle while another person scruffs the fox.
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## 6. Post-Capture Procedures

- **Notify:** After capture, inform all involved parties that the fox is safe.
- **Transport:** Ensure the crate is securely closed and that the fox is safely transported.

**Note: Handling foxes can be dangerous. Ensure all handlers are trained and equipped for safety.**

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### Approval & Sign-Off

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