**Bat-eared Fox**
Updated: October 9, 2018

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## Interpretation Guide

| **Status** | SSP – Purple
Least Concern (IUCN Red List) |
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<tr>
<td><strong>Danger</strong></td>
<td>Humans. No major threats, but they are subject to subsistence hunting and for their pelts.</td>
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<td><strong>Threats</strong></td>
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</table>
| **Population** | Wild: Stable
Captivity: |
| **Distribution** | Southern and eastern Africa |
| **Habitat** | Short grasslands and savannah in the dryer regions. |
| **Diet** | Wild: Small invertebrates, such as termites (80% of their diet), ants, spiders, scorpions, and crickets. They also eat small birds, mammals, and reptiles, and desert truffle.
Zoo Knoxville: |
| **Size** | Length: 18-2- inches; Tail: 9-13 inches
Height: 12-16 inches, at the shoulder
Weight: 7-12 pounds |
| **Longevity** | Wild: Up to 13 years
Captivity: Up to 13 years |
| **Social Family Units** | In southern Africa, the adult pair lives with their kits. In eastern Africa, an adult male lives with up to three females and their kits. |
| **Reproduction** | Females are sexually mature at 18 months. Breeding season is September-November. Gestation is 60-75 days. Litters can be up to 6 kits (pups), with an average of 3 or 4. Kits are mature at 6 months. |
| **Our Animals** | Ruaha (f), born 3/20/14. Her favorite foods are crickets and mealworms. |
| **Scientific Name** | Order: Carnivora
Family: Canidae
Genus: Otocyon
Species: megalotis |
Additional Information

Our Bat-eared Foxes

**Ruaha**
Sex: Female  
Birth: March 20, 2014  
Born at: Cincinnati Zoo  
Origin: Denver Zoo

**Habitat Information**
Their habitat is located in African Grasslands area next to the southern white rhinoceros and southern ground hornbills

**Status**

**Danger**

**Threats**

**Population**
Wild:  
Captivity:

**Distribution**

**Habitat**

**Ecosystem Relationships**
Predators:  
Interspecies Competitors:  
Role/Niche:

**Diet**
Wild:  
Zoo Knoxville:

**Size**

**Longevity**
Wild:  
Captivity:

**Social Family Units**

Reproduction
Animal Neighbors in the Wild

Caring for Animals

Enrichment

Behaviors
The are most active at night.

Communication/Vocalization
They communicate with their ears and their tails. They also use soft whistles and they have nine calls, mostly used to communicate within their group. The adults also scent mark their territory.

Conservation Efforts by Zoo Knoxville

Did You Know?
The male is called a dog; the female a vixen; the babies kits or pups. Bat-eared foxes find prey by walking slowly with their nose close to the ground and ears cocked. They hang around hoofed animals because from those animals come poop and insects. Bat-eared foxes have extremely pointed teeth, which enable it to quickly and efficiently chew its meals to aid digestion. They seldom drink water, instead obtaining most of the moisture they need from their food. Unlike other canids, the male undertakes most parental care duties, while the female forages for food which maintains her milk production. From a farmer’s perspective, bat-eared foxes play a vital role in controlling harvester termite populations, which are consider a pest by farmers.

Biofacts
Biofacts may be available for this species. Contact the Volunteer Coordinator for more information.

SPECIES SURVIVAL PLAN (SSP)
The Species Survival Plan (SSP) is AZA’s cooperative breeding and conservation program. Members agree to manage and exchange animals in the best interest of the species. The mission is to help ensure the survival of selected wildlife species. All SSP Programs fall into one of three categories. Here are some characteristics of each:

GREEN – These programs are the most sustainable over time. They have a published regional studbook. The populations can maintain a genetic diversity of >90% for 100 years or 10+ generations. These species are managed by at least three AZA member institutions.

YELLOW – These programs are potentially sustainable but need additional attention to increase sustainability. They have a published regional studbook. There are at least 50 animals in each population. The populations are not able to maintain at least 90% genetic diversity for 100 years or 10+ generations. They are managed by at least three AZA member institutions.

RED – These programs are not currently genetically sustainable. Additional animals are needed. They have a published regional studbook. Current populations include between 20 and 50 individuals in each program. They are managed by at least three AZA member institutions.
**CANDIDATE (PURPLE)** – These are animal programs that hope to grow into an SSP program. There are generally 19 or fewer animals in each program and/or they are held at only one or two institutions. They do not currently have a published regional studbook.

**FINAL NOTE** – Animal programs that manage species designated Extinct in the Wild, Critically Endangered, or Endangered (see IUCN organization, below) do not need to meet minimum population size and number of participating institutions criteria to be designated as an SSP Program. These SSP Programs need only to have a published AZA Regional Studbook and three defined goals.

**INTERNATIONAL UNION FOR CONSERVATION OF NATURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES (IUCN)**

For the past 50 years this organization has assessed the conservation status of species, subspecies, and varieties around the world. The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species (IUCN Red List) provides information and analyses on the status, trends, and threats to species in order to inform and catalyze action for biodiversity conservation. Some 79,800 species have been assessed; the organization’s goal is to assess a total of 160,000 species by 2020. This includes vertebrates, invertebrates, plants, and fungi and other species groups. Much more information can be found at [www.iucnredlist.org](http://www.iucnredlist.org). Assessed species are placed in one of nine categories, for which certain criteria must be met by a species to be placed in a specific category. This information is available on the website. These are brief descriptions:

**EXTINCT (EX):** There is no reasonable doubt that the last individual has died.

**EXTINCT IN THE WILD (EW):** Survivors exist only in cultivation, in captivity, or as a naturalized population well outside its native range.

**CRITICALLY ENDANGERED (CR):** The species faces an extremely high risk of extinction in the wild.

**ENDANGERED (EN):** The species faces a very high risk of extinction in the wild.

**VULNERABLE (VU):** The species faces a high risk of extinction in the wild.

**NEAR THREATENED (NT):** The species is close to qualifying for or is likely to qualify for a threatened category in the near future.

**LEAST CONCERN (LC):** The species does not meet any of the criteria for any of the endangered categories. There are widespread and abundant populations.

**DATA DEFICIENT (DD):** Information is not sufficient to make a direct, or indirect, assessment of the risk of extinction based on its distribution and/or population status.

**NOT EVALUATED (NE):** The species has not been evaluated against the criteria.