

## Who are the *Friends of the Island Fox*?

We are concerned private citizens and conservation professionals working to create public awareness about the island fox and the California Channel Islands. FIF raises funds to support education, research, and conservation efforts to ensure the island fox's survival and protect its island home.

**Find out more at  
[islandfox.org](http://islandfox.org)**

### The island fox's long-term survival depends on education

FIF provides education programs to community groups and schools from kindergarten through college. Contact us at [admin@islandfox.org](mailto:admin@islandfox.org).



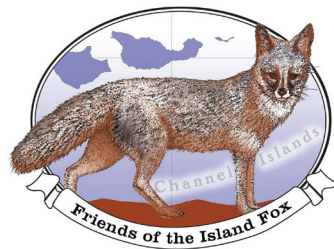
## Friends of the Island Fox



Photo by Kevin Schafer

*Working together to protect the island fox  
and the California Channel Islands*

2390 C Las Posas Road, Suite #120  
Camarillo, CA 93010 • 805-228-4123  
[admin@islandfox.org](mailto:admin@islandfox.org) • [islandfox.org](http://islandfox.org)



501(c)(3) nonprofit organization

## A rare local *treasure*

Island foxes (*Urocyon littoralis*) live on six of California's eight Channel Islands and nowhere else in the world. They are one of the smallest members of the dog family, similar in size to a domestic Chihuahua.

Each island has a separate subspecies of island fox with different physical and behavioral traits. The two smaller islands—San Miguel and San Nicolas—typically sustain 350 foxes, while the larger islands—Santa Cruz, Santa Rosa, Santa Catalina, and San Clemente—are each home to an estimated 1,000 to 2,000 individuals. At the best of times, island foxes are rare.

In 2000, island foxes on four islands nearly went extinct. The San Miguel and Santa Rosa populations fell to just 15 surviving foxes on each island. On Santa Cruz and Santa Catalina, the populations declined by over 90%. The four subspecies were federally listed as Endangered in 2004.



Photo by Eric Gotthelf

### Why did the island fox almost disappear?

Historically, bald eagles lived across the Channel Islands and kept other large birds of prey away. (Bald eagles eat fish and seabirds, not foxes.) In the 1960s, bald eagles declined because of high levels of the pesticide DDT in ocean fish. DDT caused thin egg shells, which broke before hatching. Fewer and fewer eaglets survived, until bald eagles disappeared from the islands and southern California.

The island fox knew no natural predator. It hunted openly during the day. Without bald eagles, golden eagles came to the islands to hunt introduced pigs. Tiny island foxes were an easy meal. Within a few years, golden eagles hunted island foxes to near extinction.

At the same time, canine distemper virus was introduced to Catalina Island and the island foxes were nearly wiped out.



## Why is it important to save island foxes?

The island fox is a “keystone species.” It interacts with many plants and animals. Without the island fox:

- Island deer mice populations skyrocket. Mice over-consume island plants and prey on the eggs and young of low-nesting birds.
- Island spotted skunk populations increase and prey on endangered sea birds.

With the island fox:

- Native island plants like toyon, redberry, and manzanita flourish because the island fox eats and disperses their seeds.
- Insects and birds that rely on these plants thrive, as do the reptiles and smaller mammals that depend on insects for food.
- Healthy plant communities reduce soil erosion and benefit kelp forests surrounding the Channel Islands.
- Fish and crustacean species use the healthy kelp forests as a nursery and provide food for other species like people and bald eagles.

## How your contributions help

FIF protects island foxes by supporting:

- Counting island foxes and checking their health annually
  - Monitoring island foxes with ID microchips and radio-tracking collars
  - Vaccinating island foxes against distemper and rabies
  - On-going research on island fox behavior, health, and threats
  - Campground food lockers to deter foxes from human food
  - “Fox-Saver” bins that replace old trashcans which entice and trap island foxes
  - Signage to alert motorists to slow down for island foxes
  - Educating the public
  - Ongoing restoration of native plants with Channel Islands Restoration
- Island foxes have made a phenomenal recovery and were removed from Endangered status in August 2016. The Catalina Island fox continues to be listed as Threatened because of greater exposure to people and their impacts.
- Extinction is no longer an impending threat, but the work to keep island fox populations healthy and protected continues.

## Ready to make a difference?

- \$25** Can microchip **2** island foxes
- \$50** Can vaccinate **4** island foxes
- \$100** Supports a classroom presentation
- \$350** Can put a radio-tracking collar on an island fox
- \$1500** Supports a campground food locker
- \$2000** Can install a “Fox-Saver” bin to save island foxes from dying in trash cans

### What are radio collars?



Radio collars are a first alert system for introduced diseases, injuries, golden eagle attacks, and other threats to island foxes. A radio transmitter on a small collar lets biologists track

individuals and respond quickly when island foxes are in danger.

## Donation

- ☐ I would like to help the island fox by donating \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ I’m interested in volunteering to spread the word about island foxes. Please contact me with volunteering opportunities.

Please print:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

- ☐ I would like to receive FIF’s e-newsletter
- ☐ Check enclosed payable to Friends of the Island Fox

Please mail to:  
Friends of the Island Fox  
2390 C Las Posas Road, Suite #120  
Camarillo, CA 93010

Donations can also be made by credit card or PayPal at **islandfox.org**.

*All donations are tax-deductible under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.*