

San Joaquin kit fox: Den Characteristics



Photos: Ken Sanger

Kit foxes prefer to dig their dens in friable soils. In hard clay soils they create dens by enlarging holes started by ground squirrels or badgers.

Their dens have several chambers and entrances.

The main entrance is large and shaped like a keyhole. Active dens may be littered with prey remains, scat, matted vegetation and fresh pawprints.

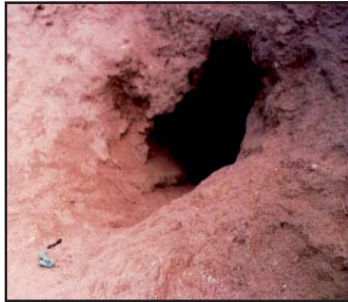


Photo: Rosalie Faubion, USBR

San Joaquin kit fox dens



The availability of suitable den sites is a crucial habitat requirement for San Joaquin kit foxes: they need dens throughout the year for shelter and to escape predators.

Kit fox dens are typically located in flat terrain or gently sloping hills, in washes, drainages and roadside berms. The dens may have several entrances, measuring approximately 8 inches in diameter, or larger.

These foxes often reuse old dens or use man-made structures, such as culverts and pipes, that are small enough in diameter to exclude coyotes.

Pupping dens are larger than others and the entrances to these natal dens are often conspicuous. In contrast, nonnatal dens may be easily overlooked, since there is less activity around them.