

Notes on the distribution and diet of Blanford's Fox, *Vulpes cana* Blanford, 1877 from the United Arab Emirates

by Peter L. Cunningham and Brigitte Howarth

Abstract. Blanford's Fox, *Vulpes cana*, occurs throughout the mountainous eastern region of the United Arab Emirates. External body measurements are similar to those presented for the species in other areas of their range. The diet consists mainly of invertebrates and fruit. Blanford's Foxes were observed with white as well as black tail tips.

Kurzfassung. Der Blanford-Fuchs, *Vulpes cana*, kommt im Bergland der gesamten östlichen Region der Vereinigten Arabischen Emirate vor. Die Körpermaße stimmen weitgehend mit jenen aus anderen Teilen des Verbreitungsgebietes überein. Die Nahrung besteht hauptsächlich aus Invertebraten und Früchten. Es wurden sowohl Blanford-Füchse mit weißen, wie mit schwarzen Schwanzspitzen beobachtet.

Key words. Distribution, diet, ecology, reproduction, Middle East.

Introduction

The documented distribution of the Blanford's Fox, *Vulpes cana* Blanford 1877, was originally limited to Central Asia, Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan and India and only recently noted to occur on the Arabian Peninsula (NADER 1990, KINGDON 1990, AL-KHALILI 1993, ROBERTS 1997). The Arabian specimens were recorded from Oman, Israel/Palestine, Saudi Arabia and the Sinai Peninsula (MENDELSSOHN et al. 1987, NADER 1990, HARRISON & BATES 1991, GEFFEN et al. 1992a, AL-KHALILI 1993, GEFFEN et al. 1993). GINSBERG & MACDONALD (1990) suggested that Blanford's Fox probably occurred throughout suitable habitat in Arabia while GEFFEN et al. (1993) suggested that they have a much larger range than was earlier believed. The first Blanford's Fox to be caught in the UAE, however, was during a vertebrate survey of the region conducted between March and May 1995 (STUART & STUART 1995). Since then further evidence of the occurrence of this species in the UAE has been obtained through active capture and dead specimens found (this study) as well as infrared photography (LLEWELLYN-SMITH 2000).

Methods

Foxes were trapped using live-capture box traps, measuring 80x30x33cm, baited with quails and dates. The following body measurements were taken after capture: total length (TL), tail length (T), hind-foot length (Hf), ear length (E) and mass (grams, g). Four foxes were caught during a vertebrate survey conducted for the Arabian Leopard Trust (ALT) during the early part of 1995