

BIG RED FOXES

by Rosemary Curley, Waterside

Fur industry people have long recognized that P.E.I.'s wild red fox is of superior fur quality, but another reason our fox commands top prices is related to pelt size. We have large foxes here, and weights and measurements best illustrate this point. Table I lists average measurements of P.E.I. foxes, and those from elsewhere. P.E.I.'s and all North American foxes are smaller than European foxes, but ours are larger than most North American foxes. Unfortunately, no New Brunswick or Nova Scotia foxes have been measured, but some representatives from fur auction houses state that P.E.I. has larger foxes. The Newfoundland subspecies is a typically small fox.

Table II shows upper ranges of fox measurements reported in scientific journals, and museum publications. Again P.E.I. foxes are demonstrated as large.

The red fox here is a hybrid, since at least six different subspecies were imported during the fur-farming heyday, but nutritional quality is probably the main reason for the large size.

It would be interesting to see how some of our other mammals stack up size-wise against the rest of the world. In the meantime, you can feel confident in bragging about our red foxes.

Table I. Reported mean measurements (mm) and weights of red foxes.

Location	Length				Length				Source
	Total length	Length of tail	Length of hind foot	Weight (kg)	Total length	Length of tail	Length of hind foot	Weight (kg)	
Illinois	1029	374	166	5.25	967	348	158	4.13	Storm, 1972
Iowa	998	359	157	4.82	946	337	145	3.94	"
Indiana	...	...	...	5.25	...	...	...	4.21	Hoffman and Kirkpatrick, 1954
England	1083	412	152	6.70	1012	385	141	5.40	Kolb and Hewson, 1974
Scotland	1148	436	167	7.30	1090	411	159	6.20	"
N. Ireland	1090	367	161	6.90	1025	348	151	5.80	Fairley, 1970
U.S.S.R.	...	...	...	9.00	...	...	...	....	Novikov, 1962
P.E.I.	1072	407	170	5.60	1017	382	161	4.82	Curley, 1983

