



Don't be so Fennec-y

Audience

Designed for 4 years old and up.

Goal

Students learn why Fennec foxes have such large ears.

Objective

- To understand the function of Fennec foxes large ears.
- To run off some energy.

Conservation Message

There are 23 species of foxes worldwide. Foxes are an important part of their ecosystem and without them there would be a devastating cascading effect.

Background Information

Foxes have many adaptations that help them survive in the wild. The Fennec fox is the world's smallest fox species, only weighing 2-3 pounds full grown; however, their ears can be almost six inches long. Fennec foxes are also known as the Desert fox because they live in the Sahara and Arabian Deserts, where temperatures can soar up to 117° Fahrenheit! Many people think their large ears are just used for hearing, but they aren't! A Fennec foxes ears help them "shed heat" during the hot and sunny days in the desert by dissipating excess heat.

Materials Needed

- Multiple layers of clothing (shirts, jackets, pants)

Length of Activity

Approximately 20-30 minutes

Procedure

- Gather a bunch of clothing, such as long sleeve shirts, jackets and pants. Put the clothes in a large pile.
- Place the pile of clothes at a starting point.

- Run a lap around your house, yard or another area.
- Every time you reach the starting point, put on another layer of clothing.
- Continue this process until you start to get hot. This is how a Fennec foxes feels in the heat of the desert when they move around too much.
- Next, you will begin to shed layers of clothing. Sit down for a few minutes after shedding each layer before running your lap.
- Continue to shed the layers and sitting until you get to your base layer.
- Notice that as you shed your layers you begin to feel a cooling sensation. It is not sudden but gradual. This is how the Fennec Fox experiences thermoregulation through their large ears!