

# First sighting of rare Sierra red fox in Yosemite in 100 years

By Bill Lindelof  
blindelof@sacbee.com

The first confirmed sighting of a rare Sierra Nevada red fox in Yosemite National Park in nearly a century was reported Tuesday.

The fox (*Vulpes vulpes necator*) was photographed walking in a snowy forest by a remote camera set up by wildlife biologists.

Yosemite biologists on a five-day trip to the far northern part of Yosemite checked on previously deployed motion-sensitive cameras. They returned with photographic evidence of the fox on Dec. 13 and Jan. 4 within the park boundary.

The nearest verified spotting of a red fox occurred five years ago in the Sonora Pass area, north of Yosemite. Biologists from UC Davis, state Fish and Wildlife and the U.S. Forest Service have been monitoring the small Sonora Pass population since it was first documented in 2010.

Research in the 1990s focused on a small group of Sierra Nevada red foxes in the Lassen Peak region, about 150 miles north of Yosemite. The Sierra red fox is smaller and darker than the introduced lowland population of red foxes.

Yosemite biologists will continue to look for the Sierra red fox with their remote cameras. At each camera station, according to a Yosemite press release, crews have set up "hair snare" stations in hopes of getting a fur sample for DNA analysis.

With a genetic analysis, scientists hope to find out if the Yosemite animals are related to those in the Sonora Pass area.

"We are thrilled to hear about the sighting of the Sierra Nevada red fox, one of the most rare and elusive animals in the Sierra Nevada," said Don Neubacher, Yosemite National Park superintendent.

Call The Bee's Bill Lindelof, [\(916\) 321-1079](tel:9163211079).