



## Cybercitizen Challenge

### Site digging

**Guiding level:** Brownies / Guides

**Topic:** Authenticating online information

**This activity does not require a computer.**

In this group activity girls learn about authenticating online information by visiting four stations in various parts of the room. At each station, there is a helper who holds up a picture of a website girls might come across while looking for information about the swift fox.

In addition to the helper holding a picture of the website, each station has three pieces of paper on the floor in front of the helper with "YES", "NO", or "MORE DIGGING IS NEEDED" printed on each of them.

At each station girls ask the helper a series of questions (see questions below in the "Guided Discussion" section; the answers are printed on a sheet that the helper reads from).

Once the helper has answered their questions, the girls must decide whether or not this is a good, not good, or potentially good ("more digging is needed") source of information. The girls will place the proper sticker on the answer they most agree with before moving on to the next station.

#### Preparation

- 1) Each girl will need four stickers to mark her answers
- 2) Photocopy:
  - The [Swift Fox Website Examples](#) for the group activity (four in total)
  - The response sheets that accompany each website example (four in total)
- 3) Prepare the following by hand:
  - Four sheets of paper with "YES" on them
  - Four sheets of paper with "NO" on them
  - Four sheets of paper with "MORE DIGGING IS NEEDED" on them(Each of the four stations should have one set of "YES", "NO" and "MORE DIGGING IS NEEDED")



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## At your meeting

1. You will need four helpers to each hold up a different swift fox website example at the four separate stations the girls will be visiting. (The helpers can be Guiders, parents or girls.)
  - Each helper holds a sheet of paper in front of her that features one of the website examples.
  - Behind it, he/she will be holding the sheet of paper that has the responses to the girls' questions when they come to that station.
  - On the floor at each station are the 3 sheets of paper with "YES", "NO", and "MORE DIGGING IS NEEDED" printed on them.
2. Divide the girls into four groups and give each girl four stickers.
3. **Guided discussion**

Tell the girls, "Imagine your teacher has given you a project about the swift fox in Canada. That night, at home, you go onto the Internet to search for information. In your search results, four websites pop up. *(At this point you could have the helpers "pop" up in various corners of the room.)*

When I say 'go', each group will go to one of these four websites. At each website, you get to ask some questions, which the website helper will answer. Then you have to decide whether or not this website would be a good place to get your information (YES), a bad place to get information (NO), or a possible place to get good information, but you'll have to do more checking to be sure (MORE DIGGING IS NEEDED). You decide by putting one of your stickers onto the piece of paper that matches your answer. When everyone has done this, I'll tell you to switch until each group has visited all the websites.

Before we begin, what are some of the questions you might ask to find out whether or not the information is good? (Give the girls time to talk about this.)

When you are looking for information online, there are some questions you should ask yourself to help you decide about the information you find.

**Who** posted the information?

- Does anyone here know somebody who writes or posts photos on the Internet (older sister or brother, school, etc.)? Who knows somebody who



has published a book (count them)?

- It is much easier to put something online than to write and publish a book. Anybody can put something online, so we need to find out more about the author before we can decide whether or not the information is good.
- What kind of a website is this? Is it a good place to find information? Where are some good places on the Internet to find information about the swift fox? (Online encyclopedias, government websites, school websites, universities, wildlife organizations.)

**What** kind of information is this?

- You're going to get hundreds of websites coming up when you search for "swift fox," so you need to make sure the websites you choose have the right type of information that you need.

Your teacher has asked you to find out everything you can about the swift fox in Canada. If a website pops up that has good information about the swift fox in the *United States*, does that give you the information you need? What about a website for the Swift Fox Art Studio? Is this the kind of information you need?

So when you visit each of the "websites" here in this room, you need to ask two questions: "Who posted the information?" and "What kind of information is this?" (*Prompt the girls a few times until they remember these questions.*)

4. Have the groups visit each website station. Once they have asked their questions and placed their stickers on the answer they think is correct, have them switch to the next website station until each group has visited all the stations.
5. Bring them back together as a group.

Ask the girls: Did any of you choose "more digging is needed" for any of the websites? What are some of the ways you can double check your information? (Let the girls offer suggestions. Answers may include asking a family member, asking your teacher or librarian, or comparing what you have found to information on other websites.)

Tally and review the votes for the responses at each station.

## Key points

Website number one: Alberta Sustainable Resource Development





- Government websites are good sources of information because they hire experts to provide information. This is a website for the province of Alberta. Can anyone tell me how you can tell? (Point out the provincial logo on the page.)

Website number two: Ray Rasmussen's photography and Haiku Website

- The author of this website is not an expert; he is a parent who became interested in the swift fox when his daughter wrote an essay for school. Does this mean that the information is wrong? Not necessarily, if he got his information from good sources. But you are going to have to do some checking to be sure.

Website number three: Wildlife Preservation Canada

- There is not much on this page that tells you about this organization. Where would you click to find out more?
- There is one hint on this page that this would be a good website to get information from. Its partners include reputable organizations like Alberta Environmental Protection, the Calgary Zoo and the government of Saskatchewan's Environment and Resource Management Department.

Website number four: Essay by Sarah

- This is a report on the swift fox by a student at Ralph Brown School in Winnipeg Manitoba.
- Sarah is not an expert, but if you look at her bibliography, which links to the sites she used, you can see they are good places to find information: the Canadian Wildlife Service and the World Book Multimedia Encyclopedia.

And can anyone remind me who you can ask if you need help finding information? (A family member, teacher or librarian or Brownie Leader!)

# Web site # 1



<http://www.srd.gov.ab.ca/fishwildlife/status/swfox/index.html>



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## Web Site # 1: Answers

### Who posted the information?

This information comes from the government of Alberta's wildlife protection department. You can tell this by looking at the government symbols and contact information on the page.

### What kind of information is this?

This is a report on the swift fox population in Alberta.

Should you use this information in your report? Put your sticker on the answer you agree with: yes, no, or more digging is needed.



## Web Site # 2

Swift Fox: Vulpes Velox - Windows Internet Explorer

http://raysweb.net/specialplaces/pages/fox.html

File Edit View Favorites Tools Help

Swift Fox: Vulpes ... X

### The Swift Fox [Vulpes Velox]



My interest in the Swift Fox, the smallest of North America's wild dogs, was generated when my daughter decided to write about them as a school project. "Once we numbered in the thousands, but now we are bones and dirt," she wrote in her essay entitled [I am a Swift Fox](#).


Few Canadians realize that this marvelous, cat-sized canine was extinct in all of Canada until about two decades ago when attempts were first made to reintroduce them.

The return of the Swift Fox is a marvelous tale of the human spirit -- and the people whose hompages you will see below who have given their lives to reintroducing them. And, if you want to help, their links will lead you to how you can do so.

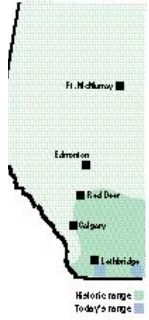
**Status:** Endangered. Swift fox disappeared entirely from Canada in the early 1900s. Reintroduction programs in the last 15 years have established a small population of 150-200 in the southern prairies of Alberta and Saskatchewan.

**Size:** Smallest of the North American wild dogs. An adult weighs 2 to 3 kilograms.

**Lifespan:** In the wild, three to six years. In captivity, they live for up to 14 years.



**Risk factors:** Foxes are curious and have little fear of people so they're easy to kill. In the early 1900s, hundreds were destroyed accidentally during predator control programs aimed at removing wolves, coyotes and ground squirrels from the prairies. Some people continue to mistake them for young coyotes and kill them. Habitat loss due to agricultural, industrial and urban development also reduced their numbers. Dens were ploughed over and native grasses replaced with tall cereal crops that are unsuitable for foxes or their food.



If you would like to help the Swift Fox to recover in Alberta, visit the web pages of the [Cochrane Ecological Institute](#) to learn how.

<http://raysweb.net/specialplaces/pages/fox.html>



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## Web Site # 2: Answers

### Who posted the information?

This information comes from a personal Web site posted by a person named Ray who enjoys nature.

### What kind of information is this?

This is an essay Ray has written on the swift fox in Alberta.

**Should you use this information in your report? Put your sticker on the answer you agree with: yes, no, or more digging is needed.**



## Web Site # 3

WILDLIFE PRESERVATION CANADA - Windows Internet Explorer

http://www.wptc.org/wildlife/swiftfox.php

File Edit View Favorites Tools Help

WILDLIFE PRESER... X

HOME ABOUT US WILDLIFE RECOVERY CONSERVATION PROGRAMS HOW YOU CAN HELP DONATE NOW


Burrowing Owl  
Dominican species  
Eastern Loggerhead Shrike  
Echo Parakeet  
Mauritius Fody  
Mauritius Kestrel  
Pink Pigeon  
Spiny Softshell Turtle  
Swift Fox  
Vancouver Island Marmot  
Woolly Spider Monkey  
Field reports

### SWIFT FOX


***Vulpes velox***

**Description:** One of the smallest foxes in the world, the swift fox weighs just 2.5 kilograms and measures about 30cm high at the shoulder. It is named for its speed, which can reach 60 km/hr. The fox is nocturnal and feeds on small mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, insects, grasses and berries, as well as carrion left by larger predators. Their estimated home range size is thought to be about 12-32 square kilometres. They form lasting pair bonds, and both male and female rear their young. Breeding occurs in March and two to five pups are born in the den in mid-May. Their life expectancy in the wild is three to six years and up to 14 years in captivity.

**Original range:** Swift foxes were once found from the Prairie grasslands in Manitoba to the foothills of Alberta, and south through the central plains states to Mexico.



Swift Fox in winter



Swift Fox

**Swift Fox field reports**

- > Field Report, November 2001
- > Talk by Axel Moehrenschrager
- > Field Report, December 2000

**WPC'S Swift Fox Census Program Partners**

- > [Alberta Environmental Protection](#)
- > [Calgary Zoo, Centre for Conservation Research](#)
- > [Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks](#)
- > [Parks Canada](#)
- > [Saskatchewan Environment and Resource Management](#)

Internet 100%

<http://www.wptc.org/wildlife/swiftfox.php>



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## Web Site # 3: Answers

### Who this information?

This information comes from a not-for-profit organization called Wildlife Preservation Canada, which has been protecting animals and training young scientists since 1985. If you were looking at this website online, you would click on the “about us” button, which takes you to a page that explains what this organization is all about and lists all of its partners and supporters.

### What kind of information is this?

This is an information page about the swift fox.

**Should you use this information in your report? Put your sticker on the answer you agree with: yes, no, or more digging is needed.**

## Web Site # 4

Swift Fox - Windows Internet Explorer

http://www.wsd1.org/ralphbrown/Endangered%20Animals/swift\_fox.htm

File Edit View Favorites Tools Help

Swift Fox



**Description**

**Size:** about the size of a house cat

**Weight:** 2-3 kg

**Color:** brown

### Swift Fox

By Sarah

**APPEARANCE:** The Swift Fox is a member of the dog family and related to the coyotes, wolves, dogs and other foxes. The Swift fox is extirpated from Manitoba. There is a small group of 150-200 on the southern prairies of Alberta and Saskatchewan. The Swift fox got its name from how swiftly it runs. The Swift fox weighs up to 2 or 3 kilograms. It grows to be about the size of a house cat. The Swift fox's throat, shoulders, chest, back of ears and legs is a light buff. It also has black patches by its nose. The Swift fox's under fur is thick. The guard hairs are spread out. The Swift fox's forehead, back and tail is gray. Inside of its ears is white. Its summer coat is thin and its winter coat is thick for warmth.

**HABITAT:** The Swift fox lives in dens. They live on mixed grass prairies and shrubby deserts. They live in Southern Alberta, Northern Texas and Western New Mexico.

**FOOD:** The Swift fox eats small animals, reptiles, amphibians, meadow larks and lark buntings. They will also eat fish, insects, mice and grasshoppers. Sometimes they'll eat berries and grasses.

**WHY EXTIRPATED?** The Swift fox is extirpated because it's hunted for its fur. Farmers turn their habitat into farmland. They often are poisoned or caught in traps set out for other animals.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**

1. "Swift fox." Hinterland Who's Who Ottawa: Canadian Wildlife Service, 1993.
2. Rasmussen, Ray " Swift Fox" Canadian Green Links <http://www.doe.ca/envcan/docs/fox/fox.html>
3. "Swift fox" World book Multimedia Encyclopedia Chicago: 1996 CD ROM

[http://www.wsd1.org/ralphbrown/Endangered%20Animals/swift\\_fox.htm](http://www.wsd1.org/ralphbrown/Endangered%20Animals/swift_fox.htm)



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## Web Site # 4: Answers

### Who posted the information?

This information was written by a student named Sarah. You can tell this by looking at the name under the title.

### What kind of information is this?

This is a paper about the swift fox.

**Should you use this information in your report? Put your sticker on the answer you agree with: yes, no, or more digging is needed.**



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