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## Species of the Day: Darwin's Fox

<u>Darwin's Fox</u>, *Pseudalopex fulvipes*, is listed as 'Critically Endangered' on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species<sup>™</sup>. This small fox has a disjunct distribution, with one population in the coastal mountains on mainland Chile and another 600 km south on Chiloé Island.

With only about 250 individuals remaining, this endemic fox is considered to have the highest extinction risk of any Chilean mammal. Although protected by law, direct persecution by humans continues. While habitat loss due to farming and logging means that the species is pushed into less desirable habitat (pastures and open areas), and closer to human populations, the greatest risk is the presence of domestic dogs in protected areas as potential vectors of disease and fatal attacks on foxes.

There is a local movement to disseminate information about the fox and the threats it faces amongst local schools, dog owners, farmers, and loggers. There is also an effort to expand the total protected area on the mainland. Basic research is needed on the species' density, distribution, population genetics, and disease risk/exposure.









