2021 marked our second cub season working under Covid 19 restrictions and it’s a source of wonder to all of us that we’ve continued to operate as effectively as ever and, thanks to stringent regard for health and safety, none of our staff or regular volunteers have been laid low by the epidemic.

We took in 354 cubs this year, some of which were quickly reunited with their parents, some of which, sadly, were beyond our help and 180 that were obliged to stay with us right through the season, until we were able to rehab them safely back to the wild.

This is probably a good time to explain how that process works...

Let’s consider the case of Wynn, one of our first cubs of the year. That’s him above, gazing thoughtfully out of his pen at the setting sun, perhaps quietly wondering how he can get into the big, wide world he can see through the wire and do what he wants, rather than what we want!
Every cub comes in with its own back story. Maybe it’s been picked up unnecessarily by a well-meaning member of the public. Perhaps it has become separated while the vixen was moving the litter to a new earth or den. Or it might be sick, injured or suffering from some congenital problem.

Some arrive having been manhandled by a cat or dog (perhaps that should read ‘cathandled’ and ‘doghandled’!) And sometimes an entire litter must be brought in because we know for a fact the vixen has fallen victim to traffic.

Wynn was picked up next to a dead sibling in South Wales and initially referred to a rescue centre in Liverpool. It was early in the season; they’d not yet admitted any cubs and were concerned Wynn would have no-one to bond with. Knowing we already had cubs, they called us, but, with Wynn being an early, very well-developed cub, the weight difference was too great to mix with ours and we recommended they try elsewhere but come back if unsuccessful.

Cubs need to be matched for size and temperament, otherwise the smaller cub can be at an uncomfortable disadvantage as the more developed animal reaches the point where serious play-fighting begins.

There was, however, a cub of similar weight with another rescue group in Surrey, so the cub was duly transferred there.

In the meantime, our first cub of the year, Wendell, was growing fast and, because he was born earlier than most, we had the same problem in terms of grouping him with others.

It is vital that single cubs are brought together to create new litters as soon as possible to reduce the likelihood of them bonding with the only other life they know – US! We did what all of us do in the early part of the season, and that’s to phone around other rescue groups looking for a match.

By chance, that same Surrey-based rescue group reported they had two suitable cubs and as they didn’t want to separate them, we took both and grouped them with Wendell in a brooder cage. Instant joy and happiness for all concerned.

It was only then that we discovered from transferred paperwork that one of these cubs was that same Welsh lad! He’d got here after all.

Turned out someone had got the weight wrong and this cub, which we named Wynn – a good Welsh name – would always have been suitable to pair with Wendell.
The third male cub was named Wilfred, and the trio was soon joined by Calvin and Bertie.

The three beginning with ‘W’ were keen bottle feeders and grew ever faster on the special puppy milk we start them on, and the pate we use to begin the weaning process. Calvin and Bertie were never interested in the bottle. Although they were smaller in size, they had spent longer with their mothers before falling foul of fate, and they knew a real nipple when they saw one – and this wasn’t one!

Cubs grow fast and a brooder will only hold them for so long before their accommodation needs to be upgraded to steel Shorline vet cages. And even those are insufficient for curious, active youngsters who are developing speed and agility – albeit wobbly speed and agility!

The next step for our group was day release in a two-storey chicken run and back in the warm at night for a bedtime bottle and a bowl of dog food. They loved that. And then they were moved to a closely monitored foster pen, where muscles could develop and where they could feel the weather.

As soon as Wendell, Wilfred and Wynn were weaned off the bottle, they were transferred elsewhere, to one of our team of thirty plus fosterers, who have pens in their gardens where they can look after a litter without getting any more involved with them than they can help. This is where we work seriously towards getting the cubs to revert to wild in preparation for late summer release.

Now the cubs have lost touch with their baby-bottle feeder, they should be getting suspicious of people in general, and their first instinct when the fosterer approaches should be to run into the hutch provided. If they don’t and they begin to get waggy and latch on to the fosterer, we move them to a new fosterer. And we keep doing that right through the summer.

From mid-June, the process becomes properly serious, and we start to move cubs onto pre-arranged rehab sites. These are predominantly rural - often farms and smallholdings – or edge of suburbia. But never urban. These cubs are now wild but they are inexperienced and where they quickly learn to hide themselves securely in hedgerows, they stand infinitely less chance of living long enough to learn where’s a good place to hide if the first thing they encounter upon release is a busy road.

The cubs are now the rehabber’s responsibility – that’s the person that owns or resides on the chosen site. Their job is to feed, water and clean out the pen and never to speak. If the cubs emerge from the hutch, they need to scare them back into hiding. A cautious cub is a cub that will live the longest. If you’ve made anybody tame, you’ve undermined their potential for a safe and long life.

After four to six weeks on site, our cubs are used to the sights, sounds and smells of every other animal in the area and all of those animals have come to accept our cubs are part of the territory. That means they can safely be released without danger of attack. Come the night of release, the rehabber simply leaves the door open and walks away.

The timing for the final part of this procedure is governed by nature. Just as the breeding season fluctuates a little every year – for no reason we can fathom – so will natural dispersal.

This is when wild-raised cubs will begin to fan out from their home territory in order to locate their own, a vital issue if they’re to reduce in-breeding and necessary if they’re to find a mate of their own a few months from now.

Dispersal starts when cubs are around four to five months old and the release of our own cubs is timed to coincide with that point. Release too early and any adult foxes with their own cubs - that we might not even have known were there -, could attack our cubs as competitors to their own. Release too late and territories may be occupied and defended against our cubs, who lack the greater experience of wild-raised cubs. For the sake of our cubs, we have to get everything right.

Wynn and his chums were released in open country near Heathfield, East Sussex. Initially, they all returned for back-up feeding, which is provided for so long as it’s needed. It’s seldom needed for long. Gradually, as they begin to use their innate instincts and everything nature provided them with, they return less and less often.

When they no long return, you must hope they are doing well. Not that it’s any of your business. They’re doing what they were born to do and whatever befalls them, good or bad, is down to them.

But even when they disappear, we often see them again, sometimes months, or even years later. And we know who they are, because no two foxes are exactly the same and you always know those you’ve spent time getting to the point where your efforts have given them that all-important second chance.

So long, Wynn, Rupert etc., - it was nice knowing you.

And for those still waiting and keen to go

Sussex. Initially, they all returned for back-up feeding, which is provided for so long as it’s needed. It’s seldom needed for long. Gradually, as they begin to use their innate instincts and everything nature provided them with, they return less and less often.

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So long, Wynn, Rupert etc., - it was nice knowing you.
Finally, on the subject of cub rescue and rehab, you may have seen the recent two-part series “Fantastic Foxes; Their Secret World”, hosted by Steve Backshall - second from left with some of our team.

The programmes were, in fact, filmed back in 2019 but, because of the coronavirus epidemic, they were temporarily shelved. But the content is just as relevant to any cub season in The Fox Project’s history and features footage of various cubs - Kirsten, Taffy and Captain Morgan – going through the system from bottle feeding to release in an East Sussex woodland.

If you didn’t see it first time around, the series is available on Channel 5’s catch-up service at www.my5.tv/fantastic-foxes-their-secret-world

When do I get out? I’ve missed the start of the season. Might have been in with a chance of replacing Lionel Messi at Barcelona if you’d been a bit quicker off the mark!

That’s the escape tunnel dug. Are we ready to go?

Right! I’ve got hay bedding and peanut sandwiches in the box. Stick it down and leave it by the door for the courier and I’ll see you later.

Olive, are you sure this catapult thingy is going to get us over the wire?

We can get eighteen inches off the ground now, Nellie. Keep practicing, and we’ll be able to jump over the seven foot fence in no time.

You fool, Saddler! It’s come up inside the pen. We’re back where we started!
**What do you want for Xmas?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Price</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Christmas card</td>
<td>“Driving Home for Christmas” - this year’s exclusive Christmas card from our resident artist Thea Olrog. Pack of five with envelopes.</td>
<td><strong>£3.50</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2022 Calendar</strong></td>
<td>Dani Clarke designs our annual calendar, using many of the photos she has taken of cubs she fostered for us earlier in the year, and she’s come up trumps again for our 2022 offering.</td>
<td><strong>£7.95</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cosy winter beanie hat</td>
<td>Cosy Winter Beanie with embroidered logo. One size fits all. Sand or Moss Green.</td>
<td><strong>£11.50</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Wynn” T-Shirt</td>
<td>“Wynn” 100% soft organic cotton T-Shirt. Seen that picture somewhere before? You have, indeed! It’s artist Cath Braum’s inspired take on our cover photo. Sizes: S, M, L, XL, 2XL (generous fit).</td>
<td><strong>£13.50</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cotton Apron</td>
<td>Cotton Apron in 100% cotton canvas. Our oven mitt has proved very popular, so here’s the matching apron! Adjustable neck. One size fits all.</td>
<td><strong>£20.00</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Cub Adoption Scheme”</td>
<td>And there’s our Cub Adoption Scheme – always a favourite gift for friends and family, or for yourself, because nobody deserves it more! For £30.00, you can follow the development of three rescued cubs from spring to autumn 2022 – rescue to release - by means of four personalised certificates, the first of which will arrive in good time for Christmas stating who the gift is from. (See application form on Sales, Adoptions and Donations page.)</td>
<td><strong>£30.00</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tea towel</td>
<td>Fox and Snowflake Tea Towel designed by artist Lauren Spencer. 100% cotton.</td>
<td><strong>£8.75</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

See order form overleaf – and we’ve got even more goodies online at [www.foxproject.org.uk/shop/](http://www.foxproject.org.uk/shop/)
SALES, ADOPTIONS AND DONATIONS

Please fill in the above form and return by post to:

The Fox Project, The Lodge, Kings Toll Road, Pembury, Kent TN2 4BE

01892 824111 • fox@foxproject.org.uk • www.foxproject.org.uk

SALES, ADOPTIONS AND DONATIONS

Standing Order Authority

Name of your Bank:_______________________________________ Branch Title:______________________________________________

Address of your Bank: ______________________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

Your Account Name: _______________________________________ Account No: _______________ Sort Code: _______________

"Please pay the sum of £__________ from the above account on the ____________ day of each month/year
commencing ________________ to Natwest PLC, 130 High Street, Tonbridge, Kent TN9 1DE for the credit of:

Southern Wildlife Ambulance Network/The Fox Project, Account No: 81996950 Sort Code: 60-21-28"

Signed: ________________________________________________________________ Dated: ____________________________________

Gift Aid Declaration

I wish to Gift Aid any donation shown here and any donations I make in the future or have made in the past 12 months
to Southern Wildlife Ambulance Network / The Fox Project (charity no: 1190070)

Title: ______ Name: ____________________________________ Signed: _________________ Dated: ________________

Address:____________________________________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________ Post Code: ___________________________________________

Telephone number:___________________________________ Email: _______________________________________________

Please send all future communications by email

Price Item Size / Colour Quantity Total
£3.50 “Driving Home for Christmas” – five pack with envelopes X X X X X X X X X

£7.95 2022 Calendar with envelope

£8.75 Fox and Snowflake Tea Towel

£20.00 Cotton Apron

£13.50 “Wynn” organic cotton T-Shirt - S, M, L, XL, 2XL

£11.50 Cosy Winter Beanie (Sand or Moss Green)

£30.00 Cub Adoption

Total

UK Postage £3.20

Donation

Overall Total

Privacy Statement

Further to recent changes to Data Protection laws, we would like to make it clear that we do not share your data with any other company or charity. Neither do we store credit and debit card details. These are destroyed immediately following any transaction and are never shared – even within the organisation – by email or other form of written communication. In this and other regards we are obliged to comply with annual security assessments stipulated by Worldpay. Our full Privacy Statement may be viewed on our website or mailed to you on request.

Please send Adoption Certificate to:

Name: _________________________________________________________________________________________________________
Address: ________________________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

Postcode: _______________________________________________________________________________________________________

Email address if digital copy preferred (essential for overseas adopters)

Please say it came from me

(enter name you wish to be known by if you are giving this adoption as a gift.)