

## A red fox road-kill in Unzen City

Kei K. SUZUKI<sup>1)</sup>

### Introduction

Populations of the red fox, *Vulpes vulpes* Gray, 1868, are considered to be declining in several prefectures in Kyushu Island, Japan (Suzuki, 2021), and the animal is classified as Near Threatened in red list of Nagasaki Prefecture. Although red foxes have been observed in many parts of the prefecture, to my knowledge, there have been very few published research reports in recent years (Ohmukae and Matsuo, 2013; Fukagawa, 2016). I recently found a road-killed fox. As I believe that the accumulation of accurate habitat records is important for the conservation of this species, I am reporting here on this find.

### Results and discussion

At around noon on 30 October 2021, I found a dead red fox (Fig. 1) lying on the road on Route 251 through the city of Unzen, in Nagasaki Prefecture. The location (32° 49' 46.33" N, 130° 10' 03.01" E) was about 200 m west of Abozaki Station. Although the animal's head was deformed, the body was relatively clean and there was no damage from bird-feeding, indicating that not much time had passed since death.

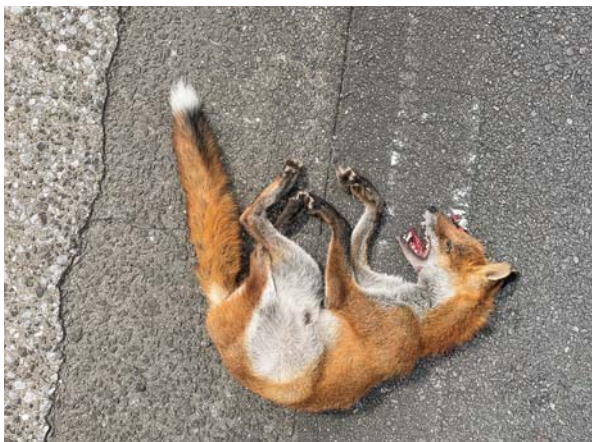


Fig. 1. The road-killed fox in Unzen City.

No measurements were taken at the site because of the large number of passing vehicles and the consequent danger involved.

The area where the fox was found has a mixture of mainly residences and agricultural land. In addition, to the south of the scene, there are several linear forested areas that are intermittently connected to Mt. Unzen (Unzen-dake). My find, together with the report of a fox road-kill southwest of Mt. Unzen by Ohmukae and Matsuo (2013), suggests that the fox is widespread on and around Mt. Unzen. Additionally, Fukagawa (2016) reported road-kill of a red fox approximately 8 km northwest of the location of my discovery, pointing out that this area is important because of the interaction between two populations, namely those of Mt. Tara and Mt. Unzen. The location of the current road-kill suggests possibility that foxes use this area continuously.

### References

- Fukagawa, G. 2016. Sighting record of *Vulpes vulpes japonica* Gray, 1868 in Nagasaki prefecture, Japan. Transactions of the Nagasaki Biological Society (78): 59-60.
- Ohmukae, A. and Matsuo T. 2013. A road kill fox in Shimabara Peninsula. Transactions of the Nagasaki Biological Society (73): 43.
- Suzuki K.K. 2021. Mammals in prefectural red lists in Kyushu area. Animate (16): 37-45.

<sup>1)</sup> Kyushu Research Center, Forestry and Forest Products Research Institute  
4-11-16 Kurokami, Chuo, Kumamoto, Kumamoto, 860-0862 JAPAN