

# Raccoon (*Procyon lotor*)



- Raccoons are members of the Procyonidae family. They are related to the Coati, Ringtail, Kinkajou, and Olingo.
- The common name "Raccoon" comes from the Algonquin word "Aroughcun" or "Arakum," meaning "he scratches with his hands."
- If you have a Raccoon in your neighborhood, count your blessings; rats and mice are a raccoon's primary diet! Raccoons are invaluable in keeping rodent populations down.
- Raccoons have been revered by Native Americans for millennia; for their intelligence, human-like dexterity and their maternal devotion. The title bestowed by the Aztecs on a mother Raccoon with young was the same as used for wise women in their society.
- The black mask of a Raccoon helps reduce glare while aiding in camouflage, and may enhance night vision.
- Biologists have found that for every Raccoon removed from an area, three more appear to move in on this previously occupied territory.
- Raccoons have thousands of times more nerve endings in their forelimbs than we humans do! Part of a Raccoon's brain (the somatosensory cortex) is dedicated to this enhanced tactile sensation. This part of the brain is what controls specialized organs, such as an elephant's trunk or a monkey's tail.
- Female Raccoons seek a safe place to bear their young. Mothers avoid urinating and defecating in the denning site to prevent odors which could draw predators to their young.
- If a mother Raccoon has had babies on your property, just wait. Once they are weaned (eight to nine weeks old), their mother will relocate them on her own.

PLEASE...have a heart- DON'T TRAP! Trapping can cause fatal injuries; in their frantic efforts to free themselves, a Raccoon can slice their forelimbs to the bone. If a raccoon is truly unwelcome on your property, there are several simple things one can do to deter them:

- Motion Detector Lights and changing Automatic Sprinkler settings will help deter unwanted Raccoons
- Scent Deterrents (such as "Shake Away", sold at Armstrong Garden Centers and ""?) can be used to create a boundary around your property that Raccoons will avoid. These scent deterrents are chemically synthesized and do not affect domestic animals (such as cats and dogs).
- Keep pet food indoors and don't leave out any food at night. Food left out is interpreted as "ooh, free buffet!" and Raccoons have excellent memories; which means your house may be visited in the future.
- Dispose of any fallen fruit in your yard...again, you are removing a food source (and a delicious one!)
- Trash should be kept in a heavy duty container with a secure lid.
- Check fencing and be careful to limit the branches leading to your roof (be sure to cut branches back during the fall or winter, or you may be destroying bird's nests).
- If they must be evicted from your attic or other "nest" site, light, sound and being a nosey neighbor will persuade a mother raccoon to move her young. Tap the ceiling where you think she may be with a broom handle a few times. The trick is, disturb her AT DUSK. This will allow her time to search for a new site in the cover of night. It may take her a couple of days to move. Also, she may forget one so keep listening for cries. When you think the animal has vacated, put a pc of crumbled newspaper in the access hole. If it has not been disturbed in a couple of days, seal the hole.

If any Raccoon proves oblivious to these "hints", give us a call at the WWCC. We'll help you resolve the issue without spending hundreds of dollars and harming the animal!