

Raccoon

(Procyon lotor)



Raccoon Photo: TPWD

Identification:

Size: Average wt. = 15-30 lbs.

Coloration: Brown, orange, mixed with salt-and-pepper gray.

Other distinguishing features: distinctive black "mask" on face outlined with white. The bushy tail has an alternating pattern of black and whitish rings.

Habitat:

Raccoons are extremely adaptable and can be found near water in most all habitats statewide.

Benefits:

Raccoons are nature's cleaning crew, eating most anything they can get to. They'll eat fish, insects, snakes, carrion, birdseed, dog food, even garbage.

Problems / Concerns:

Raccoons are quite capable of living in urban areas. This in and of itself is not a problem. However, due to their adaptability, raccoon populations reach densities in urban areas higher than that of rural areas. Increased population density and a tolerant demeanor results in raccoons frequenting human dominated areas. They will take advantage of any available den site (including chimney's, attics, under houses and porches, in tool sheds, etc.), and feed on any available food source (such as pet food and trash). Since raccoons are known to carry diseases that can be transmitted to pets and people, this close association should not be allowed.

City Management Policy:

Eradication of this species is neither possible nor recommended. However, the city will not actively manage for the success of this species. The city will maintain secure trash containers to help eliminate artificial food sources. If deemed necessary, the city may trap and destroy a habitually offensive individual.

Note: Trapping and relocating animals does not work. It is not a viable solution.

Citizen's Responsibility:

Raccoons are a natural part of our local ecosystems and pose little threat to human beings. However, since practices and conditions found in suburban neighborhoods are the primary reasons raccoons flourish in urban areas, citizens are encouraged to do the following.

1. Secure all trash can lids.
2. Secure areas where birdseed and pet foods are stored.
3. Clean up spilled birdseed from around feeders and don't leave dog food, cat food, etc. out overnight.

4. Seal any openings in attics, chimneys, crawl spaces, etc. that could be used as a den.
(Be sure there are no raccoons trapped inside before you seal any openings.)
5. Above all, don't feed raccoons! This will only desensitize them further and may lead to aggressive behavior in the future.

Similar Species:

None in the area.