

Raccoon Natural History



- **Scientific name: Procyon Lotor**
- **Body length is 18-28”, tail length 7-12”, hind foot 2.5-4.25” and weight is 12-35 pounds. Females are usually smaller than males.**
- **Hair color is usually a mixture of grizzled gray, brown, rust and black and may range from silver gray to almost black, belly is grayish brown. Black facial mask across eyes and onto cheeks. Tail has alternating dark and light bands**
- **Average lifespan of 2-7 years in the wild. Some may live to 16 but most don’t make it past their second year. Primary causes of death are humans (hunting, trapping, cars) and malnutrition**
- **Capable of speeds up to 15 mph, excellent climbers and strong swimmers (coat is not waterproof)**
- **Excellent hearing and night vision**
- **Omnivorous and opportunistic (in most habitats plants provide the largest percentage of a raccoon’s diet**

Raccoon Reproduction



- **Sexual maturity for females at 12 months. Gestation period of 59-65 days producing an average litter of 3-5**
- **Males rarely sire young until second year and do not remain with female.**
- **Peak breeding season January-March with occasional mating through June**
- **Dens are kept meticulously clean to avoid attracting predators**
- **Nesting raccoons in chimney or attic WILL vacate on their own once the young are 8-9 weeks old. If you can't wait, close the damper in your fireplace (if applicable), place a blaring radio (preferably talk show or rap music) near the den before dusk. Mother raccoons will not move their babies during daylight hours. It may take a few days for mom to move all the babies so please be patient. Once you suspect they are gone, sprinkle flour near the entry hole and check for footprints for a few days. Listen for cries or movement which may indicate a baby left behind. If you seal the entrance before the babies have all been moved, the mother will cause a lot of damage attempting to force her way back in for them.**
- **Once you are certain the unwanted residents have vacated, the only way to ensure that they don't return is to seal all possible entrances. Cover uncapped chimneys, openings in attics, roofs and eaves. Secure loose shingles. Repair holes in siding and use heavy rust proof screening to cover open air vents and chimneys. Trim all overhanging tree branches or any other structure that might be used to reach the roof.**
- **Mid-Atlantic Wildlife Control, LLC – John 443-417-3137 or Cindy 443-617-6795**

Raccoon Development



- **At birth: 3-5 ounces (75 g), 4-6 inches long with 2-2.25 inch tail lightly furred with faint mask, eyes and ears closed**
- **1-2 weeks: 75-175 grams, pigmented tail rings, legs unable to support weight but beginning to crawl**
- **2-3 weeks: 200-300 grams, 7-10 inches long, eyelids beginning to separate, facial skin fully furred, mask and tail rings more prominent, beginning to vocalize**
- **3-4 weeks: 300-500 grams, 10-13 inches long, eyes open, ears open and away from head, respond to sights and sounds, legs able to support weight and very vocal**
- **4-6 weeks: 500-800 grams, well furred, canines and incisors visible, able to walk, run and climb**
- **At 7 weeks they will engage in active play fighting characterized by growling, squealing, biting, wrestling and imitating adult defense postures.**
- **Begin to travel with mother at 9-10 weeks and remain with her until the following spring. Other raccoons will defer to a female with babies in feeding situations.**
- **Adult teeth develop at approximately 6 months**

It is very important to inform concerned callers that it **NORMAL** to see a female raccoon during the daylight hours in the spring and early summer. Mother raccoons are very dedicated and protective and when they have young babies they feed during the day so the infants are not left alone and vulnerable during the night when other raccoons are active. While it is always wise to use caution, **PLEASE** do not trap or shoot a raccoon simply because it is visible during daylight hours. Most of our orphans are a result of uninformed people panicking and killing or removing a mother because they see her during the day and think she must be rabid.



- Rebecca – the White House raccoon belonging to President and Mrs. Coolidge



- Author Sterling North with two raccoon friends



- The raccoon is the state animal of Tennessee and was nominated to be the national symbol but the bald eagle received more votes!

