



## HUMAN-RACCOON CONFLICTS

Raccoons are normally shy, nocturnal animals but can become habituated to humans and our pets. Raccoons can cause significant damage to gardens, buildings, crops and livestock in their search for food and denning sites.

**Some people feed raccoons under the mistaken idea that this helps the raccoons. Food-conditioned and human habituated raccoons become bolder around humans and are then far more likely to come into conflict.**

Raccoons are protected under the BC Wildlife Act. While trapping and relocating raccoons without a permit is allowed if they are causing damage to a person's property, it can be challenging to do so humanely and safely. WildSafeBC recommends exploring other options under 'Manage Your Attractants' that may have longer-lasting results. If removal is necessary, consider contacting a qualified pest management contractor.



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The BC Conservation Foundation is a not-for-profit, registered charity that has been working in BC since 1969.

[www.bccf.com](http://www.bccf.com)



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To report wildlife in conflict contact the Conservation Officer Service at

**1.877.952.7277**

**WildSafeBC is funded through the Province of British Columbia and in partnership with communities and organizations throughout BC.**



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Version 4.1 - 2024  
cover photo by Peter Sulzle

# RACCOON



British Columbia Conservation Foundation





## MANAGE YOUR ATTRACTANTS

Since raccoons can cause significant damage to buildings and gardens in their search for food, it is best to ensure they do not become comfortable in your yard.

- 1. Keep all garbage securely** stored until the day of collection. Placing garbage at the curb before collection day is just inviting trouble with wildlife.
- 2. Feed pets indoors**, or if fed outdoors, take in any feed that is not immediately eaten.
- 3. Take birdfeeders down until winter.** Birdfeeders can attract raccoons. If raccoons are present in the winter, take birdfeeders in at night.
- 4. Keep pet doors locked at night.** Raccoons will enter homes if they feel they can get a meal on the other side of a pet door.
- 5. Prevent raccoons from denning inside your house** or outbuildings by sealing up any holes or potential entrances. This is best done before March, or after August, to avoid separating family units that may already be inside.
- 6. Never feed raccoons** even though you may think you are helping them out. Raccoons have evolved to live without our help and feeding just leads to conflict.
- 7. Keep barbeque grills and grease traps clean** as raccoons will quickly key in on these high calorie food sources.

## ! RACCOON SAFETY

Raccoons can become aggressive towards humans if cornered or handled. Given their small size, they do not pose a serious threat but are capable of inflicting minor injuries.

If approached by a raccoon, scare it away by yelling, clapping or making noise. Keep small pets inside, especially at night. Cats and small dogs can be seriously injured or even killed in conflicts with raccoons. Never attempt to approach a raccoon. Like all wildlife, raccoons can act aggressively if they feel threatened.

**Raccoons sometimes carry a dangerous parasitic roundworm that can be transmitted to humans through contact with fecal matter. If cleaning an area where raccoons have frequented, wear a mask, goggles and gloves. While raccoons have the potential to carry rabies there have been no cases of rabies found in raccoons in BC.**



Raccoons can be found in a wide variety of habitats including forests, marshes, and farmland. Highly adaptable, raccoons can also thrive in the densest urban centres.

**Raccoons are opportunistic omnivores, feeding on an extremely varied diet. While known to eat just about anything edible, some preferred foods include nuts, insects, berries, clams and bird eggs.**

Raccoons have incredibly sensitive and dexterous forepaws with tactile hairs on their front paws. This allows them to exploit a variety of food sources. Their habit of catching aquatic creatures like crayfish, minnows and frogs has led to the myth that raccoons wash their food before eating it.

Raccoons enter a fattening-up period in the fall to prepare for their denning season in the winter. They may accumulate a layer of fat up to 2.5 cm thick. In much of their Canadian range, raccoons have a winter denning period where they sleep away the harsh winter months. This is not a true hibernation but rather a period of inactivity to survive a time of food scarcity. In warmer regions or urban cores where food is available throughout winter, raccoons may stay active year round.

## ! WHERE'S THE RACCOON?

If you'd like to document your sighting and contribute to the distribution of information for raccoons, submit a report to [iNaturalist](https://www.inaturalist.org).



## RACCOON FACTS:

- Raccoons are easily identified by their characteristic black eye mask and striped tail. Raccoons typically measure between 60 to 95 cm from nose to tail and weigh between 6 to 8 kg. Females tend to be approximately 25% smaller than males.
- Raccoons live throughout southern BC and along the coast, including Haida Gwaii. Raccoons are being seen with increasing regularity in the Thompson/Okanagan region of the province.
- Raccoons are usually solitary animals (except for females with young) but they will congregate if there is a good food source.
- Raccoons in the wild have a relatively short average life span due to high mortality amongst the young. While wild raccoons have a life expectancy of 3 to 5 years, raccoons in captivity can live upwards of 15 years.
- Raccoons are preyed on by many animals, including coyotes, wolves, hawks, owls and bobcats. The young raccoons are especially susceptible to predation.
- Raccoons can breed from January through to June but peak breeding occurs from March to April.
- Raccoons usually give birth to 2 to 3 young called kits, which are ready to leave the den by 7 weeks of age.



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