



(Photo: Kristin Few)

COEXIST WITH Raccoons

With their cat-like movements and masked faces, raccoons, especially kits, can tempt even the most wildlife-wary people in for a closer look.

But like all wildlife, raccoons should be left alone. They can transmit rabies, and while transmission to humans is rare, the risk should be taken seriously.



(Photo: U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service)

Raccoon Quick Facts:

I saw a raccoon in my yard in the middle of the day and it didn't seem afraid of me. Does it have rabies?

Not necessarily. It is increasingly common to see animals, such as raccoons and foxes, out during the daytime. Raccoons and other wildlife are becoming accustomed to humans, and therefore less frightened of the humans they encounter. In addition, there is an abundance of foods available for raccoons during daytime hours. Animals that appear sick may appear so for many reasons, including injury, parasites, stress or diseases other than rabies.

What can I do to prevent catching rabies?

It is extremely rare for a human to catch rabies, and even rarer for a human to die from the disease. The last rabies-induced human fatality in North Carolina occurred in 1953, before readily available pet and human vaccinations and post-exposure treatments for humans. However, humans can be exposed and treatments can be costly, so precautions should be taken.

About half of all rabies exposures are through pets. Have cats and dogs vaccinated against the disease. In addition, do not try to handle or pet wildlife. Stay away from unusually aggressive, tame or disoriented animals. Animals showing these types of behaviors do not necessarily have rabies, but should still be avoided. If contact does occur, seek advice through your local health department.

Will the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission trap and relocate raccoons that are causing problems in my neighborhood?

No. The N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission provides technical guidance to people dealing with raccoons. Because raccoons are a rabies vector, they cannot be trapped and relocated under any circumstances. All trapped raccoons must be euthanized or released on the property where they were captured.

Can I trap a raccoon on my own?

Yes. If the trapping season is open, you can trap and euthanize an animal yourself following N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission regulations. If the trapping season is not open, and the animal is causing damage, you can obtain a depredation permit and trap and euthanize the raccoon. Visit ncwildlife.org/trapping to learn more about trapping seasons and trapping regulations.

How do I hire someone else to get rid of the raccoon?

Visit ncwildlife.org/have-a-problem for lists of licensed trappers and Wildlife Damage Control Agents who can trap and euthanize the raccoon.

More information on raccoons:
ncwildlife.org/raccoon



Preventing Conflicts with Raccoons

Below are lists of non-lethal and lethal options that people can take to prevent and resolve conflicts with raccoons.

Non-lethal Options:

- **Secure garbage in containers** with tight-fitting lids, and take them out in the morning or pick up, not the night before. Garbage cans can be secured with a bungee strap, ratchet strap or latch.
- **Feed pets indoors or remove food** when your pet is finished eating outside. Raccoons and other wildlife are attracted to pet food left outdoors.
- **Keep bird-feeder areas clean**, and use bird feeders that keep seed off the ground. If you frequently see raccoons, remove all feeders.
- **Don't intentionally feed raccoons**, other wild animals, or feral cats. Raccoons will lose their fear of people and feeding a raccoon rewards it for coming near people and can spread disease due to the artificial concentration of animals. Once a raccoon becomes habituated to people, it may become bold and aggressive.
- **Close off crawl spaces** under sheds, porches, and decks, and secure your attic from entry. Raccoons may use these spaces to rest or to build their dens.
- **Educate your neighbors.** Your efforts to prevent raccoon conflicts will be less effective if neighbors are still providing foods, both intentionally and unintentionally.

Lethal Options:

- If trapping season is open, trap and euthanize the animal yourself following Wildlife Commission regulations found at ncwildlife.org/trapping or hire a licensed trapper. A list of trappers is available at ncwildlife.org/have-a-problem.
- If trapping season is closed and property damage has occurred, hire a Wildlife Damage Control Agent. A list of agents can be found at ncwildlife.org/have-a-problem. Or, obtain a depredation permit from the Wildlife Commission and trap and euthanize the raccoon.
- If trapping season is closed and property damage has not occurred, use non-lethal options, as these options are the best long-term options for preventing future conflicts.
- Raccoons can be hunted during the regulated hunting season. However, check to see if local ordinances restrict the discharge of firearms and visit ncwildlife.org/hunting for hunting season dates and areas.

