



# RACCOONS

## BENEFITS OF RACCOONS

Despite the mischief this masked mammal can sometimes cause, raccoons play an important role in the ecosystem by serving as gardeners, pest control, and the "clean-up crew",

Raccoons are beneficial to ecosystems for the distribution of plant seeds. Feeding on berries and nuts, not only on meat, raccoons then help distribute the seeds around the areas they inhabit.

Raccoons also eat carrion, or the remains of dead animals, and feast on small rodents and insects. This keeps areas clean, which in turn helps to keep pest populations in check

## TIPS FOR REDUCING HUMAN-RACCOON CONFLICTS:

- **Do not feed wildlife.** This increases the chance that the animal will lose its natural fear of humans.
- **Feed dogs and cats indoors and clean up after them.** Water, pet food, and droppings can attract small mammals, including raccoons.
- **A leashed dog is a safer dog.** When out for a walk, keep your pet leashed to greatly reduce the chance of a negative wildlife encounter.
- **Tightly cover garbage and compost bins.** Open bins encourage scavenging.
- **Seal potential denning locations within your home.** Placing caps on chimneys and blocking outside entryways to crawlspaces, attics, and under porches will deter raccoons.

## NATURAL HISTORY

- Raccoons are members of the Procyonidae family, often categorized as "little bears". Raccoons are common throughout the United States. These extremely adaptable creatures can thrive in almost any environmental setting, and live in both the city and country.
- Raccoons are omnivores and will eat almost anything. Their diet is typically made up of 40% invertebrates (such as insects, mussels, and crustaceans), 30% plant material, and 30% vertebrates (such as small mammals, birds, and reptiles).
- Raccoons are semi-social, often sharing a territory with a small number of other raccoons. They spend the majority of their time alone, but will meet at resting and feeding areas without conflict.
- Raccoons are primarily nocturnal, meaning they're most active at night, though it is not uncommon to see them awake during the daytime.