

Raccoons



- **Raccoons** (*Procyon lotor*) are found throughout southern BC and Vancouver Island
- **BC raccoons are not known to carry rabies**
- As Schedule B and Furbearer animals under the *BC Wildlife Act*, raccoons can only be trapped using devices listed in the BC Hunting & Trapping Regulations, only between October 1 and March 31 (except for Haida Gwaii)

Understanding Raccoons

Raccoons are curious and clever. They are agile and excellent climbers. Although mostly active at night, raccoons may be out during the day, especially if nursing.

Raccoons...

- have one litter of 3-4 babies in spring
- babies leave the den at 10 weeks old and often remain with mother for 4-12 months
- den in extreme winter conditions and when raising young



Did you know?

Raccoons are omnivores – they are **valuable scavengers**, eating discarded food and foraging for insects, fruits, nuts, clams, fish, and snails.

Common Conflicts

Raccoons can come into conflict with people through interactions with garbage, bird feeders, ponds, pets and farm animals. They can damage turf by rolling up new sod while foraging for insects. They sometimes den in structures like attics, chimneys, and sheds. Raccoons are often attracted to food scraps in open dumpsters, and can be trapped inside (in this case, a ladder or plank left overnight will

allow them to escape). Raccoons may also set up latrines in residential areas. Raccoon roundworm eggs are shed in feces, so avoid direct contact and wear gloves and face mask for protection. Motion-sensor lights or sprinklers can help discourage latrine site use.

Humane Choices

The BC SPCA does not support killing raccoons for nuisance reasons.

Relocation of adult raccoons should only be done outside the breeding season within the animal's home range, and as per *the BC Wildlife Act* (within 1km on Vancouver & Gulf Islands, 10km in rest of province). Killing is rarely necessary and control methods should be selected to cause the least harm to the animal's welfare. If attractants have not been removed, more raccoons may arrive, so follow-up monitoring is needed.

The BC SPCA strongly encourages non-lethal, non-contact methods. Prevention and exclusion comes first, followed by deterrence, and if necessary, eviction. Eviction should be done carefully to avoid potentially orphaning young.

Conflict Resolution

If animal is at risk, cage traps may be used for relocation within home range. Raccoons may be taken to a wildlife rehabilitator for treatment if needed. If in critical distress, a veterinarian or rehabilitator may euthanize.



Recommended Actions & Methods

Prevention & Exclusion
Before any conflict, and
to prevent future issues

Remove potential food sources

- ✓ Secure garbage bins and composts
- ✓ Bird feeders are not overflowing, no pet food outside
- ✓ Collect fruit fallen on ground
- ✓ Secure fresh sod with or use non-toxic diatomaceous earth to prevent soil insects

Maintain roofs and chimneys

- ✓ Block access to vents and under porches, decks and crawlspaces
- ✓ Use secure chimney caps
- ✓ Remove access to rooftops (e.g. by trimming branches)
- ✓ To confirm den use – loosely cover hole with leaves, newspaper or straw; if present, raccoon can push it away and re-open

Deterrence
If babies are mobile
(10 weeks old) or there
are no babies

Use mild humane harassment techniques

- ✓ Place apple cider vinegar-soaked rags in plastic container with holes in lid, place containers in den or entry points
- ✓ Place lights at den entrance or play radio nearby
- ✓ Close entry when raccoon (and family) move out

Eviction

Evict the animal

- ✓ Use a one-way door so raccoon can leave, but not re-enter
- ✓ Do not install when there may be dependent young in den, or if necessary, be sure to use reunion techniques
- ✓ Leave door in place for 2-3 nights
- ✓ Follow all prevention and exclusion steps above

These are legal, regulated methods - but they are **not recommended*** as they can cause animal suffering, may be high risk to non-targets, and/or are difficult to administer; legality must also be confirmed according to local bylaws and/or regulations

- Carbon dioxide or carbon monoxide - using pure gas cylinder into sealed chamber with regulator
- Shot to brain of trapped or free-ranging animal
- Killing neck snare
- Spring trap (e.g. Conibear-style)
- Egg trap (i.e. dog-proof trap)
- Manually applied blunt trauma that induces immediate unconsciousness
- Penetrating captive bolt
- Cervical dislocation

*email wildlifecontrol@spca.bc.ca for information on these methods

It is **illegal** to use...

- Bait poisons or chloroform
- Drowning or suffocation
- Leghold or foot snare
- Carbon monoxide by vehicle exhaust
- Electrocution of conscious animal
- Freezing (including dry ice)

