

## Raccoons

Notes - Raccoons are smart omnivores and will eat a wide range of foods, so they will take advantage of opportunities provided.

**Issue – knocking over garbage cans, hanging out in yards and being reluctant to move away.**

Suggestions – remove attractions!

▶ Don't feed raccoons, and encourage neighbors not to. Feeding leads to concentration of larger numbers in a small area and to raccoons losing their fear of humans so they become bold.

Established feeding should be gradually discontinued to prevent problems.

▶ Build a slatted wooden cage for your garbage can to fit inside. It should have a top and one side that open so garbage can be put into it and it can be easily pulled out for emptying.

▶ Secure garbage cans with ropes, chains, bungees, weights, clamping lids, and to prevent tipping, with small fencing or stakes to hold the cans upright.

▶ Feed pets indoors.

▶ If feeding outdoors, opt for late morning or midday feeding, pick up food, water bowls, leftovers, or spilled food before dusk.

▶ Feed outdoor cats on a surface elevated at least 4 feet above the ground, with smooth sides that can't be climbed. (Raccoons are good climbers but can't leap up the way a cat can).

▶ Clean up barbecue areas immediately after use

▶ Keep compost in secure containers

▶ Keep garbage cans in a garage until collection day.

▶ Use motion activated lights to scare raccoons from particular areas.

**Issue - coming in through cat doors.**

Suggestions-

▶ Lock pet door at night

▶ Install a pet door with a sensor activated by a device on the pet's collar.

**Issue – Denning under houses in attics or chimneys.**

Notes – it is best to take preventative measures before a raccoon takes up residence. Always check to make sure no animals are inside before blocking holes etc. If a mother has kits in a den (~April – June) measures taken to prevent access could lead to starving kits being left behind or to extensive damage as she frantically tries to get back in. At ~ 8 weeks, kits are mobile enough to follow Mom and measures can be taken to block them out at this stage.

Suggestions –

▶ Close any openings securely with ¼ inch mesh hardware cloth, boards, or metal flashing.

▶ Prevent roof access by trimming tree limbs away from structures

▶ Attach metal flashing around corners of buildings (at least 3 feet square) so they can't climb up.

- ▶ Use commercial products such as flexible metal or plastic spikes to keep them from climbing downspouts and gutters (check the a local farm supply center)
  - ▶ Remove vegetation from buildings (e.g. ivy) that raccoons can climb.
  - ▶ Place a bright light under the deck or house.
  - ▶ Put a radio, set on a talk radio station, in the area.
  - ▶ Put ammonia or vinegar soaked rags in a coffee can, with holes punched in the side, and place the can under the deck or house, to allow the smell to slowly permeate.
- It may take a couple of days before they leave so check the area often.
- ▶ Wadded-up newspaper lightly tucked into the exit point or flour sprinkled on the ground outside and inside that point can help to tell if an animal has come back and/or left.
  - ▶ Once they have gone, sprinkling cayenne pepper inside the entrance/exit point can help keep them out for a short time until permanent measures are taken.

### **Issue – Killing chickens/ducks**

Suggestions – (also see suggestions in fox section)

- ▶ Keep chickens in an enclosure with a roof.
- ▶ Close birds in a secure house before dusk
- ▶ Completely enclose outdoor pens (including roof) with 1-inch chicken wire placed over a sturdy framework. Overlap and securely wire all seams to prevent raccoons from forcing their way in. To prevent them from reaching in at ground level surround the bottom 18 inches of pen with ¼ inch hardware cloth.
- ▶ Surround the cage with a 2-wire electric fence system at 6 and 12 inches or at 12 and 18 inches above the ground. (Can be solar powered)
- ▶ Equip poultry houses with well-fitting doors and secure locking mechanisms. Raccoons' paws make it possible for them to open various types of latches.

### **Issue – climbing up to bird feeders, into fruit trees etc.**

Suggestions-

- ▶ Install a 3 foot section of smooth flashing or vent pipe around the bottom of the tree or pole Attach a funnel-shaped (minimum of 18 inches) metal or hard plastic piece (like an Elizabethan collar) around the tree/pole, pointing downwards, at least 3 feet off the ground, to prevent the raccoons climbing.
- ▶ Hang feeders from wires on slender branches or long, thin poles from deck rails.
- ▶ Take bird feeders in at night.

### **Issue – catching fish in ponds**

Suggestions-

- ▶ Provide lots of places for fish to hide, e.g. cinder blocks, ceramic drain tile, wire baskets, or upside-down plastic crates held down with heavy rocks.
- ▶ Install motion activated sprinklers or lights near the pond.
- ▶ Build pond at least two feet deep and with steep sides, as raccoons like to wade but don't dive down to catch fish.

