

# RACCOON FACTS

- The name raccoon comes from an Algonquian word. Its scientific name, *lotor*, is Latin for "one who washes."
- Raccoons are often called "masked bandits" because of their unusual face markings.
- Raccoons often dwell in large family groups.
- The male raccoon takes no part in raising its young.
- Female raccoons often give birth to four or five young once a year.



## IDENTIFYING TRACKS



Hind foot

Front foot



### New Mexico Department of Game and Fish

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**SE Area Office**

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For more information, please visit  
the Department website:  
[www.wildlife.state.nm.us](http://www.wildlife.state.nm.us)

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P.O. Box 25112, Santa Fe, NM 87504

A GUIDE FOR PEOPLE WHO LIVE IN AREAS  
WHERE RACCOONS MAY BE PRESENT

# LIVING WITH RACCOONS IN URBAN AREAS



## NEW MEXICO DEPARTMENT OF GAME AND FISH

[www.wildlife.state.nm.us](http://www.wildlife.state.nm.us)



# LEGAL STATUS



Raccoons are protected furbearers in New Mexico, with established seasons for running, hunting and trapping. New Mexico does have provisions for landowners to control furbearers that are damaging property. If you encounter problems, you must check with the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish before trapping or using lethal control methods on raccoons and other furbearers.

## MINIMIZING HUMAN ENCOUNTERS & CONFLICTS



**DO NOT FEED RACCOONS:** Feeding raccoons and other wildlife creates a nuisance for you and your neighbors by making the animals comfortable and dependent upon humans.

**KEEP PET FOOD INDOORS:** Keeping pet food indoors will eliminate the attraction of your house to raccoons and will minimize encounters with your pets. If confronted by humans, raccoons can be very aggressive.

**KEEP GARBAGE AREAS CLEAN AND SECURE:** Garbage containers emit strong odors that can attract wildlife. Keeping these areas clean and containers tightly sealed will reduce the attracting odors.

**RACCOONS AND PONDS:** Ponds provide food and water for all types of wildlife when full of water and ornamental fish. Ponds that contain ornamental fish should be covered with a wire mesh to help protect the fish from raccoons.

**RACCOONS IN LAWNS AND GARDENS:** Scare tactics can help protect your property from wildlife. Devices such as scarecrows and electronic repellers are available on the Internet or from your local wildlife agency.

**ELIMINATE ENTRY POINTS FOR RACCOONS:** Make sure all areas that lead underneath homes and decks are sealed to prevent raccoons and other wildlife from getting in and denning. Be sure that all animals are gone before sealing any holes. Chimneys should have wire mesh on them to prevent entry.



## HISTORY

Raccoons (*Procyon lotor*) are opportunistic and intelligent creatures that have adapted and thrive in urban landscapes.

Raccoons are mammals that weigh 10 to 40 pounds and can grow to be two to three feet in length. They are gray, black and white with a black mask over their eyes and rings on their tails. They can live to be 12 years old in the wild.

They are found throughout the United States with the exception of higher elevations in the mountainous regions and a few of the more arid regions of the Southwest.

Raccoons are omnivores (eat both plants and animals). They feed on berries, nuts, crayfish, fish, frogs, turtles and much more.

They can be found in areas with water and trees and generally den in ground burrows, brush piles, abandoned buildings, haystacks, hollow trees and underground drainages within cities.

They breed in February or March and have a gestation period of about 63 days, with most litters being born in April or May. The average litter size is three to five kits and they raise one litter per year.

Raccoons are mostly nocturnal, which makes them most active at night. Adult males often range from three to 20 square miles, while females will only travel one to six square miles.