

Culver City Animal Services
4040 Duquesne Avenue
Culver City, California 90232
Tel: (310) 253-6143
Tel: (310) 837-1221
Fax (310) 253-6127
animal.services@culvercity.org



RACCOONS

Raccoons (*Procyon lotor*) are common throughout California. They are medium sized animals 12-35+ pounds and 20-40 inches long, including a bushy tail with 4 to 7 black rings. The fur has a salt and pepper appearance with the black mask marking on a whitish face characteristic of the species.

BIOLOGY

Raccoons breed mainly in February and March, but mating may occur from December through June. The gestation period is about 63 days. Most litters are born in April or May, but some may not give birth until August. Raccoons produce one litter per year of 3 to 5 young. The offspring are weaned between 2 and 4 months and usually stay with the female until the following spring.

The diet of the raccoon ranges from fruit, berries, grain, eggs, poultry, vegetables, nuts, fish, insects, rodents, carrion, pet food and garbage. Raccoons are typically nocturnal animals. Adult males may occupy areas of 3 to 20 square miles; females may occupy areas of 1 to 6 square miles. Raccoons den in hollow trees, drainpipes, homes, under decks, buildings, brush piles, and burrows.

DAMAGE

In urban areas, raccoons can damage buildings (particularly attics and roofs), gardens, fruit trees, lawns, garbage cans, and trash containers. They are also attracted to pet food left outdoors and will attack pets. Occasionally, one or more raccoons will establish a communal toilet area. In rural areas, raccoons may feed on farm crops or raid poultry houses.

DISEASE

All wildlife species can carry diseases and parasites. Raccoons are known carriers of rabies (rare), canine distemper, encephalitis, histoplasmosis, trypanosomiasis, coccidiosis, toxoplasmosis, tularemia, tuberculosis, listeriosis, leptospirosis, roundworms and mange. They can also be infested with fleas, ticks, lice and mites that are known transmitters of disease.

LAWS AND REGULATIONS

The California Department of Fish and Game regulations prohibit the relocation of raccoons or other healthy wildlife. Healthy wildlife "trapped in towns or cities or removed from under buildings or otherwise taken or trapped because of human/animal conflict shall be immediately released in the area where trapped or disposed of (euthanized) as directed or authorized by the Department (of Fish and Game)." Only authorized wildlife rehabilitators may keep injured or orphaned wildlife.

(California Fish & Game Code 4000, 4001, 4180 and California Code of Regulations Title 14 Section 465.5(g)(1) and 679(f))

The Culver City Animal Services Officer is not trained in euthanasia techniques. Due to Fish and Game regulation, the Animal Services Officer cannot transport or relocate any healthy wild animal. Therefore, Culver City Animal Services does not provide healthy raccoon trapping and/or removal services. If citizens have a routine healthy raccoon issue, they should contact a licensed private contractor of their choosing and the citizens will be responsible for any cost incurred.

The Culver City Animal Services Officer will respond to calls for service *ONLY* if the raccoon is inside the living residence (not under the house, not around the house, not in the crawlspace, not in the yard, not in the attic, and not in a trap), is sick, is injured, is orphaned (for babies and the young), or is deceased.

PROBLEM PREVENTION

Wildlife is an important part of our environment. Raccoons, squirrels, rabbits, opossums, skunks, mallard ducks, Canada geese, and foxes can all be found in Culver City. They have adapted to or have found the modification we have made to the area appealing. While these animals are seldom a threat to people or domestic animals, there are several steps you can take to discourage wild animals from becoming a recurring problem. Raccoons are attracted to urban areas by the easy accessibility of food, water and shelter. Eliminating the availability of all these factors will encourage the raccoons to leave. Prevention is the key to dealing with these wildlife nuisances and is the best all around solution to the problem both for the people and the wildlife. Addressing a problem requires much more work than prevention and is not nearly as satisfactory or effective.

A common misconception is that setting a live trap, catching and destroying the wildlife animal will take care of the nuisance. However, before too long another raccoon, skunk or opossum will move into the area. If it was a good habitat for one, it's just as good for another. Urban wildlife enjoys the easy life we often unknowingly provide for them; they don't like a hostile environment. Taking steps to deter them will encourage them to move on.

- Install a motion-activated or motion-sensored sprinkler. The motion-activated sprinkler can detect activity and when activated, it delivers a burst of water. The combination of the water spray, noise, and the motion of the sprinkler head is often effective at scaring off animal intruders and deterring skunks from specific areas near your home or garden. Check online search engines for videos of the motion-sensored sprinkler system in action. Internet stores sell the motion-sensored sprinkler devices for approximately \$45. Home improvement stores also carry the device for about \$110.



- Use metal or heavy plastic trash containers with tight fitting lids. Secure the lids with bungee cords, rope or sturdy cords. You may want to soak the cords or rope in a hot sauce or a commercial repellent. Spray a small amount of ammonia in and around all garbage cans. You may want to pour a cup of ammonia in the trash can every week after the trash has been picked up. Animals don't like the smell and will be discouraged from digging in your trash. Most animals invade human space when searching and foraging for food. If the food supply is easier to obtain elsewhere, the animals are more likely to leave your property alone.

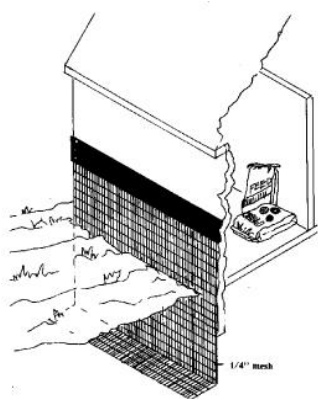


- Each fall and spring, inspect the exterior of your home for entrances that wildlife animals can use to get into the crawl space under your house. Even a raccoon does not need a large hole to enter. Make sure soffit vents and gable end vents are fastened securely. If you find vent grills open or crawl spaces open under your house, you will need to secure the openings to prevent the easy access. You can attach ¼-inch hardware cloth over the vent on the inside of the attic for extra security. Plug gaps between your foundations and sill plates. Cover foundation vents with slotted metal vent covers.



L-Shaped screen application around foundation.***

- If raccoons take up residence under a low deck, they may be excluded by using ¼-inch grid screening or solid metal flashing. Trench around the perimeter of the deck at least 12 inches deep, insert screening in trench, and backfill. Attach top of screening to facade of deck with



nails or fence post staples. Before completing final seal on the last entry point, make sure no animals are trapped inside. On the night before completing repairs, sprinkle flour in the entrance hole and check for tracks the following morning. You can also place one to two rags soaked in ammonia in the entrance hole and wait 36 to 48 hours. If no tracks are evident for 3 consecutive nights, no animals are likely present. You may wish to make a temporary one-way exit using ¼-inch grid screening. Form the screening into a cone or funnel shape that will permit animals to leave but not to reenter. The large end should be sized to encircle the entry hole and be attached over the hole to the facade of the deck or building with nails or fence post staples. The small end should face away from the house and be 4 to 6 inches in diameter.



Power supply hole sealed with metal flashing.*

- Raccoons are not inclined to break through walls or fences that are intact and in reasonably good condition. Fix any openings or weak or loose places. It's much easier to prevent raccoons from taking refuge under your deck or in burrows around your home than to deal with the problem. Raccoons like to dig at the edge or the corner of a building or structure. You can discourage this behavior by placing hardware cloth 6" beneath the ground surface. Extend it out away from the base of your deck, tool shed foundation or other applicable structure by at least three feet. Most wildlife animals will prefer to dig right next to the structure and when they can't get through the hardware cloth, they will go somewhere else. The hardware cloth can then be covered by lattice work, or other cosmetic treatments, to improve the appearance.



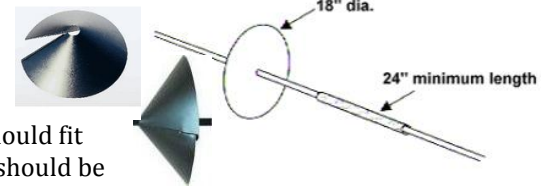
- Pet food is high in protein, carbohydrates, and fats. Having your pet's food available to the animals discourages them from their normal hunting and foraging behavior and will keep them returning to your property. Pets should be fed during daylight hours and any leftovers removed immediately. Empty or remove the water bowls at night. Be sure to lock pet doors at night.



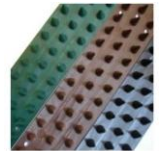
- The best deterrent, besides removing the food source, is the installation of a raccoon guard and disc or cone baffles. To prevent raccoons from climbing trees, poles, and other vertical structures, install a metal or heavy plastic barrier or a raccoon guard 6 to 8 feet above the ground. It can be made from a piece of aluminum flashing or sheet metal, held together with wire, nails, or screws, and painted to blend in. 24-inch long aluminum or galvanized vent-pipe can serve as a pre-made barrier around a narrow support. A funnel-shaped piece of aluminum flashing can be fitted around a tree or other vertical structure. The outside edge of the flared metal should be at least 18 inches away from the support. Cut the material with tin snips and file down sharp edges. Raccoons will attempt to use surrounding trees or structures as an avenue to access the area above the barrier. Keep raccoons away from roof areas by trimming tree branches 10 feet from roof and keeping climbing plants trimmed away from roof and eave areas.



- Disc baffle and pipe sleeves prevent raccoons from traveling on utility line wires, transformers, and bird feeders that have horizontal wires leading to them. Cut the plastic or PVC pipe lengthwise, spread it open, and place it over the wire. The sleeves should fit loosely so they rotate as the raccoon tries to traverse them. Sleeves should be at least 24" long. Disc baffles or metal collars should be at least 18" to 2' wide and placed 6 to 8' above the ground. Collar edges should overlap and connect by springs to allow for tree growth.



- Secure your perimeter by installing spike deterrent strips on your fences to eliminate the most common ways that raccoons will get into your garden. The plastic or polypropylene spikes are designed to provide maximum discomfort and minimum harm. Metal spikes or barbs on fencing are not permitted within Culver City. (Culver City Municipal Code 17.300.030)



- Raccoons digging in your yard do not necessarily indicate that you have a raccoon problem. You may actually have an insect problem in your lawn. Sod webworm and other larvae are abundant and the skunks are taking care of the problem for you. Call your local garden center and inquire how to effectively manage your insect problem. An effective way to get rid of grubs is by using an all natural solution, beneficial nematodes. Beneficial nematodes are underground pest hunters that control over 250 different species of ground insects. They are a very efficient organic insect control method and kill most insects before they become adults. The nematodes may take a week or more to rid your yard of grubs and the skunk will continue digging for a few days after that before they decide there are no more tasty morsels to uncover. Removing the insect infestation will remove the skunks' food source and thereby the skunks.



- If you wish to have someone trap and remove the raccoon, you can hire a private nuisance wildlife control operator which generally can be found in the Yellow Pages under "Animal Removal Services." These professional wildlife removal specialists must have the required permits to legally trap and remove wildlife. Keep in mind that removal of nuisance wildlife does not necessarily mean that you have removed the problem. Oftentimes, removing the animal just opens up space for another animal to move in and claim territory.

Your best solution would be to make your home and property inhospitable and unappealing to the unwanted animals with habitat modifications and exclusion methods.