

RACCOONS

Common Name: raccoon

Other Names: coon

Scientific Name: Procyon lotor

Appearance:

length	- about 2 to 3 feet, including a 10-inch tail
weight	- between 10 and 30 lbs., adult
color	- black mask on face; black rings around heavily furred tail
	- body coat salt and pepper with black and yellowish hairs interspersed, light belly

Range: - common statewide, but some races in Florida Keys are rare

Habitat:

- found in nearly every habitat type in Florida
- very adaptable to urban landscapes
- dens may be found in wide variety of locations, including hollow trees, culverts, crawl spaces in attics and under mobile homes

Diet:

- feed on wide variety of plant and animal matter
- particularly attracted to ripe fruit and nuts, crayfish and fish, sweet corn, and eggs
- frequently raid garbage
- will attack domestic animals confined in pens, pools and cages

Reproduction:

- usually 3-4 young per litter, although 7 young per litter recorded
- usually 1 litter per year born March through April

Behavior:

- most active at night
- natural shyness disappears where they are fed by people

Problems:

- den in and under homes; damage screens
- raiding garbage cans; eating fruit, vegetable and nut crops
- attacking caged birds, small livestock, ornamental fish
- defecating in swimming pools and digging in yard
- carry diseases such as rabies and distemper

Solutions:

- capture and removal using live traps baited with dry cat food
- exclusion using a single-wire electric fence located 8" above the ground
- enclose pools to prevent access
- secure garbage pail lids with a rubber strap

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- relocation is discouraged because of the potential for disease transmission
- in non-urban areas raccoon can be shot at night throughout the year with the use of a dog and light, and a .22 caliber firearm (check local ordinances)
- if hesitant about handling, contact a local nuisance trapper

Legal Aspects:

- may be destroyed when causing property damage
- may be removed only by a permitted nuisance wildlife trapper