

**Ponds:** The depth of ponds should be at least three feet. Avoid having gentle slopes into the water as that makes it easy for raccoons to fish. Provide an inverted ledge around the edge of the pond, and place large rocks around the edge to further inhibit raccoons. Place cinder blocks in the middle of the pond for fish to hide in. Stretch strong tensile nylon pond netting across the surface of the pond. Consider using motion activated strobe lights, noise makers, & sprinklers. Provide plenty of aquatic plants to confuse fishing animals. Place heron, coyote, or alligator decoys/effigies in or around the pond as this may frighten off animals (Be careful with pond netting as it may ensnare some animals).

**Raccoon Encounters:** Raccoon attacks on domestic pets are rare, & in most cases it is usually our pet dogs & cats initiating attacks which often leads to injury for both. Pets such as fowl, birds, rabbits, guinea pigs, hamsters, mice & rats, etc. would be considered as food to predators so they should be kept indoors when possible. Raccoon attacks on humans are very rare, however there are circumstances that can precipitate an attack such as feeding, cornering, or enticing a raccoon. If a raccoon is pregnant or protecting young and feels threatened, an attack can take place. The Majority of wild animals are easily frightened by people, so they should be scared away at every opportunity. If you come across a raccoon that doesn't turn tail and run after frightening it, or if the raccoon is out in the middle of the day, the animal may be sick, injured, may be protecting young, or conditioned to the presence of humans through feeding. If you are unsure of how to handle a wildlife conflict, contact your local Humane or Animal Services agency. Do not let children walk outside at night with food in their hands or wearing the same clothes worn during meals. Advise children to never approach any strange animals.

**What are Raccoons good for:** They are great at controlling rodent & insect populations, they also act as nature's vacuum by removing carrion from around our homes. If it were not for animals like raccoons, we could be knee deep in rodents.

**Do Not Feed The Wildlife:** (53.06.5 L.A.M.C) *No person shall feed or in any manner provide food or cause to be fed any non-domesticated mammalian predator including, but not limited to, badgers, bears, bobcats, cougars, coyotes, foxes, opossums, raccoons, and skunks. Any person violating this subsection shall be guilty of a misdemeanor, punishable by a fine of not more than \$1,000.00 or by imprisonment in the County Jail for a period not more than six months, or by both a fine and imprisonment.*

**Warnings:** Strobe lights may trigger seizures in people with certain health issues. Do not use hot wires or chemicals where children & pets have access. Do not use moth balls. Ammonia soaked rags used to deter wildlife can pose a health risk to humans, pets or the environment. If you are going to use chemical deterrents, wear protective clothing, a disposable mask, and gloves. Never place deterrent chemicals in direct contact with or near a heat source, open flame, soil, food, or near vents leading into your home. If you use ammonia soaked rags, place in a lidded jar or container with a couple of pencil sized holes punctured around it. Do not shoot at wildlife with BB guns, firearms, arrows or sling shots.



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[http://www.laanimalservices.com/About\\_Animals/Wildlife.htm](http://www.laanimalservices.com/About_Animals/Wildlife.htm)

North Central Shelter

3201 Lacy Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90031

Harbor Shelter

957 N Gaffey Street  
San Pedro, CA 90731

East Valley Shelter

14409 Vanowen Street  
Los Angeles, CA 91405

West Valley Shelter

20655 Plummer Street  
Chatsworth, CA 91311

South LA Shelter

1850 W 60th Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90047

West LA Shelter

11361 W Pico Boulevard  
Los Angeles, CA 90064

## ENCOUNTERS WITH...

## RACCOONS



Photo Courtesy U.S. Fish & Wildlife Services

City of Los Angeles  
Department of  
Animal Services  
Wildlife Division



**Urban Bandit:** Raccoons (*Procyon lotor*) belongs to the genus "Procyon" which in Latin means 'before' (pro) 'dog' (cyon) for their seemingly doglike appearance. Their species name "lotor" (washer) refers to the unusual washing of food before eating it, although it is also widely believed this action helps with digestion and has nothing to do with washing. They have a black mask across the eyes, bushy tail with 4 to 10 rings around it, and a body that is gray-black to reddish brown. They average 7-30 lbs with the heaviest known raccoon on record being 62lbs. They have keen eyesight and hearing and human-like forepaws that enable them to manipulate objects easily and climb. Raccoons are classified as nocturnal mammals that are rarely active in the daytime, although in coastal areas they often alter their normal routine to take advantage of low tides to feast on crustaceans. They do not hibernate, but may sleep for long periods. They den when it is time to give birth, and often sleep when the weather is cool. They are usually solitary animals and during breeding season males will travel 4 to 6 miles from the den site, while females seldom travel farther than 1/2 mile. They would rather flee than fight if attacked, however, when cornered, they can be one of the toughest animals around. Raccoons have been known to drown their opponent if a battle occurs in water by getting on top of the head of the other animal. They are curious about humans and will often not move off right away even if we are close; this behavior is often mistaken as aggression. Raccoons observed in full daylight may have been scared out of a den, or could be sick, injured or orphaned. Predators of the raccoon in the Los Angeles area may be Bears, bobcats, coyotes, mountain lions, and birds of prey.

**Diet:** Raccoons are omnivorous and opportunistic. Their food habits are often the main factor for the damage they cause. They eat rodents, insects, fruit, vegetables, nuts, grubs, earthworms, amphibians, reptiles, fish, birds, eggs, pet food, crustaceans, carrion, and food refuse.

**Other Raccoon Access Concerns:** Raccoons may dig in the garden, pull off roof material to gain access to the attic, enter an open garage, hide under staircase, storage and garden sheds, live under decks, pull off crawl space screens to gain access under the house, access basements via open window wells, and may even enter cat/dog doors. They have been known to den inside an uncapped chimney. In dry months they may travel via storm drains and can pop up almost anywhere.

### Trapping Wildlife in the City of Los Angeles

*The City of Los Angeles Department of Animal Services is not providing traps or issuing trapping permits for the public to use their own, rented, or borrowed traps to remove nuisance wildlife. The trapping or relocation of wildlife by the public is prohibited. The Department of Animal Services suggests trying property alteration, deterrents, & exclusionary methods. The option exists for L.A. City residents to contract with a Nuisance or Pest Control company that has permits to trap and remove some types of mammals. Wildlife trapped by these agencies would be released on site or immediately euthanized. California State law prohibits the relocation of predatory mammals (CCR Title 14 sec. 465.5).*

### Raccoon Deterrents, Exclusion & Frightening Tactics:

- Cap chimneys & secure crawl spaces entrances with 16 or 18 gauge welded wire cloth mesh sandwiched between 2 frames, Use screws instead of staples or nails.
- Trim tree branches 3 ft. away from the roof. Don't allow creeping vines to grow up to the eaves. Fire Code requires a 5 ft. vertical clearance of trees from roof tops and 10 ft. clearance from chimney outlets.
- Band or baffle trees with a 3 ft. wide section of sheet aluminum or metal flashing from about 3 ft. up from the base of the tree.
- Walls, fences, trellis and lattice work can also allow access to the roof so consider their placement or use baffles to block access.
- Pin new sod to the ground with lawn spikes, wooden stakes or cover with biodegradable lawn netting until the grass can take root. Control lawn and garden pests to limit the food raccoons seek. Your local plant nursery may have advice about the use of beneficial nematodes to reduce grubs. Prevent access to new sod by children and pets until sewn in place.
- Use heavy gauge welded wire mesh to secure chicken coops & vegetable gardens since raccoons can rip through chicken wire.
- Raccoons prefer to den within a half mile of an open water source so if possible eliminate pooling, standing or leaking water.
- Remove or cover sand boxes as raccoons and other animals may use them as a latrine. Sand can hold bacteria or organisms that can make children seriously ill.
- Close off pet doors at night or consider the use of an automated pet door that opens to a special collar worn. Be aware that raccoons may still be able to open some pet doors if not properly secured.
- Keep barbeque grills clean and grease free.
- Strap down trash can lids if possible and do not put the trash out until the day of pickup.
- Remove all extraneous outside food sources if possible. Don't throw food into an open compost pile.

- When possible, use various frightening devices and techniques such as banging pans together, air horns, bull horns, whistles, bean bags, flashing strobe lights, spraying water from a hose or water sprinklers connected to a motion sensor device.
- Never throw food or other debris into storm drains as it attracts wildlife there and also pollutes our oceans, rivers, and streams.
- Motion sprinklers can be mounted to the top of a fence, side of a tree, or placed in the yard aiming in the direction that animals are entering from.

**Fence Climbing:** Raccoons can climb most fences. One solution is to add an 18 to 24 inch wide strip sheet metal (galvanized) or aluminum placed across the upper exterior portion of a fence for baffling to help prevent further ascent. Gates may need special attention at gaps. This can be an effective deterrent if the fence is at least 6 feet in height.

### Habitation & Eviction:

Raccoons are often found in attics and crawlspaces from Spring to the end of Summer (March to September) as these locations do resemble a den. There may often be a litter of young that cannot exit without the help of their mother, so if you want to evict the raccoon, try placing a radio set to a talk station and a non-heat producing light activated by motion deep inside the space they are in just prior to nightfall. Determine animal movements by sifting out a cup of flower mixed with a tablespoon of pepper just outside and inside of the access points to see tracks coming or going. Check frequently for tracks, if there are no tracks entering, and tracks only heading out from the space for about 24 hours, you can seal the access. Repeat if any other animal is discovered inside, and do so quickly or you may end up with dying raccoon orphans. Adult raccoons forage for food nightly so they leave their young alone while doing so. The offspring are old enough to travel with their parent at about 3 to 4 months of age.



Photo by Wildlife Division LA Animal Services