

## Raccoon Fact Sheet

Raccoons (*Procyon lotor*) are a common and well-adapted species that thrive in urban areas. They have learned that garbage cans and dumpsters are reliable sources of food and that houses serve as good habitat and protection from the elements. Raccoons are great climbers and have very nimble hands, which mean that they are able to get into a lot of places where they shouldn't be. While trapping and removal is the most effective way of addressing the elimination of raccoons from your home, it can be a tricky and complicated process. There are several pest control companies who specialize in the removal of raccoons, however it is often a complicated job and can become costly.

The City of Louisville strictly prohibits the following on **public lands**, such as Open Space and Parks:

- “Take, molest, injure or hurt any bird, reptile, fish, or animal in any park or community building, or portion thereof, unless posted specifically for that purpose and in compliance with the game, fish and wildlife laws of the state.”
- “Abandon, leave or deposit dogs, cats, fowl, fish or other animals whether dead or alive” on Open Space.”
- Relocate animals onto Open Space or Parks property.

On **private lands**, citizens must follow state regulations classified by Colorado Parks and Wildlife:

- CPW will answer citizen inquiries about relocating, trapping and killing wildlife on private lands. CPW Phone: 303-291-7227; Citizens can also find information about regulations in the Colorado Small Game Brochure: <http://cpw.state.co.us/Documents/RulesRegs/Brochure/SmallGameWaterfowl.pdf>

Within **City Limits**, the following is also prohibited:

- “It shall be unlawful for any person, except a law enforcement officer in the performance of his duties, to fire or discharge within the city a revolver or pistol of any description, or a shotgun or rifle which may be used for the explosion of cartridges or shells, or any air gun, gas-operated gun, or spring gun.”

Given the above restrictions, there are several raccoon sprays and repellants that can be found at local hardware stores, however these products can be hit or miss and often involve strong chemicals which can be harmful to the environment, pets or other animals. Other home remedies include the following:

- **Predator Urine:** These products can be found online and can come from a variety of animal sources. The thought is that raccoons will assume the presence of a predator and avoid the area.
- **Hot Pepper Oil:** Although this tactic is effective, the oil has a strong effect on ALL mammals. Extreme caution should be taken during application and human contact should be avoided with the treated area.
- **Epsom Salt:** Raccoons have an aversion to the taste of Epsom salt, therefore this product is useful in deterring raccoons from eating your plants or crops.

Although there are several reactive procedures for raccoons, the best practice for addressing raccoons on your property is to prevent them in the first place. Although they are categorized as a nuisance species, raccoons are not the problem, it is that they are attracted to something on your property. Therefore, raccoons can be effectively deterred by removing the attractant.

This includes the following actions:

- Ensure that garbage cans are tightly secured and store them in your garage when not in use, especially in the evenings.
- Keep pet food or bird seed indoors.
- Close all entry points into your house/ attic.
- Install exclusion barriers around the perimeter of your porch/deck/shed.
- Block access to pools or decorative ponds.
- Completely enclose your chicken coops with small-linked wire to prevent raccoons from climbing in at night.

Keep in mind that raccoons are adapted to the dark, and most active between sunset and sunrise, so the practices listed above are most important during the evenings, when we are least likely to see the animals.