

## HUMANE METHODS TO KEEP WILDLIFE FROM LIVING IN BUILDINGS

- Check for exterior openings on all buildings (houses, businesses, garages, sheds, etc).
- Keep gutters free from debris.
- Trim tree limbs that hang over buildings.
- Cap chimneys so no animals can set up residency.
- Check for entry points in foundations, thresholds, and window wells.
- Check for entry points where exhaust vents, pipes, and cables exit the structure.
- Check the chimneys by shining a light up the flue and from the roof. Look for animal signs on the damper and smoke shelf.
- Check the roof/siding/trim boards from the outside and/or from a ladder. Look for loose vent screens, warped siding, and trim board that is deteriorated and pulled away from the wall or roof holes.
- Check the attic with a flashlight for any signs of animals. Look for droppings, chewed items and nest.



## TO FIND EVIDENCE OF A RACCOON

- Place white flour or cornstarch in front of any holes and check for footprints.
- Stuff holes loosely with paper towels to see if they get pushed in or out.



## EVICT RACCOONS

- Place a battery-operated radio in the raccoon's living area. Tune it to a talk or station that play's music with a strong beat and turn the volume up.
- Leave lights on the in raccoon's living area.
- Utilize a commercial wild animal repellent.
- When you are sure the animals have left, seal or cap any entry points.
- Caulk can be used for small holes.
- Use Staples or screws to secure heavy-duty hardware cloth over larger holes. (Chicken wire is not strong enough).
- Make permanent repairs with wood.
- Replace worn or missing shingles.
- Purchase caps to chimneys and exhaust vents.
- **NEVER** smoke any animal out of a chimney. Adults may be able to climb out, but young animals cannot and will experience a horrible death before decomposing in your chimney.
- **DO NOT** seal holes until all animals are out. Animals locked inside a sealed area will cause great damage trying to get out, and, if unsuccessful, will suffer a cruel death.



To report incidents involving wild animals, call:

**DC Animal Care and Control Facility (24 Hours a day)**  
1201 New York Ave NE. (202) 576 - 6664

**DC Health Animal Services Email Address**

For questions or concerns about rabies in the District of Columbia, please email [rabies.info@dc.gov](mailto:rabies.info@dc.gov)

**DC Health Website**

**Rabies and Animal Exposures:**

<https://dchealth.dc.gov/service/rabies-and-animal-exposures> and **Zoonotic Diseases:**

<https://dchealth.dc.gov/page/zoonotic-diseases>

**Humane Society of the United States**

For more information about raccoons, go online at <http://www.humanesociety.org/animals/>

# Urban Raccoons

What DC Residents Need to Know



## THIS ISN'T THE COUNTRY! WHY ARE THERE RACCOONS IN THE DISTRICT?

Raccoons are highly adaptable animals that are native to the Washington, DC area. Due to increased development in this region, people are seeing more and more of these opportunistic creatures. Given the raccoon's superb ability to adapt to changing environmental conditions, it's not surprising that they are comfortable in the city.



### Urban raccoons find food by raiding:

- Gardens
- Garbage cans
- Bird feeders
- Fish ponds
- Pet food bowls
- Kitchen pantries (a pet door is an open invitation).

### Urban raccoons find homes in:

- Chimneys
- Attics
- Porches
- Basements
- Trees

Cities like Washington, DC also provide extensive “subway systems” for these intelligent animals, who are quite comfortable using storm sewers as underground roadways. **While most wild or stray animals (even raccoons) are not infected with diseases, wild animals are, by nature, unpredictable and can carry diseases, such as rabies. In particular, children and pets should be watched closely to ensure their safety and that they do not come into contact with, or attempt to touch wild animals.**

## “LOVE YOUR OWN, LEAVE WILD ANIMALS ALONE!”

- Enjoy all wild animals from a distance.
- Do not handle, feed, or unintentionally attract wild animals with open garbage cans, litter, outdoor grills.
- Never adopt wild animals or bring them into a home.
- Do not try to nurse sick animals to health. If an injured raccoon or an abandoned or orphaned kit (a baby raccoon) is found, call Animal Control for assistance. 311 can get you connected.
- Teach children never to handle unfamiliar animals, wild or domestic, even if they appear friendly.
- Feed pets indoors. Do not leave uneaten pet food outdoors.
- Anytime humans or pets have **ANY** physical contact with raccoons (or other wild animals), report the incident **IMMEDIATELY** to the Mayor’s Citywide Call Center and asked to speak to someone at the DC Animal Care and Control Agency.



## WHAT IS RABIES?

**Rabies is a fatal disease transmitted from animals to humans caused by a virus that attacks the central nervous system, causing convulsions, paralysis and finally death.** The virus is present in the saliva of a rabid animal and is transmitted primarily by animal bites and rarely by contamination of open wounds, fresh abrasions or mucous membranes. All warm-blooded animals can be affected by the virus, but it is most often found in wildlife such as raccoons, skunks, foxes, and bats. Dogs and cats may also contract rabies if they are not vaccinated.

## SYMPTOMS OF ANIMAL RABIES

- Marked changes in an animal’s behavior may be symptoms of rabies. A rabid animal may:
- Be unnaturally withdrawn
- Be unusually friendly or calm
- Be very docile
- Snap at anything in its path
- Appear in the daytime (raccoons are generally, but not strictly, nocturnal)
- Search for an isolated place to die

## TIPS TO PREVENT THE SPREAD OF RABIES

**Vaccinate dogs and cats against rabies** as required by law. All dogs and cats must be vaccinated against rabies.

**Keep vaccinations current at all times.** This is important not only to keep your pets from getting rabies, but also to provide a barrier of protection to you, if your animal is bitten by a rabid wild animal.

**Keep dogs and cats under control.** Animal control laws prohibit allowing animals to roam unsupervised. Roaming pets are more likely to have been exposed to rabies than those supervised by their owners.

**Leave stray or unknown dogs and cats alone.** Loose animals are more likely to have been exposed to rabies. Additionally, loose animals may feel threatened when well-meaning humans approach, and may be more likely to attack. Keep pets away from strays, too. If you see a stray, let Animal Control know so they can remove the animal.

**Do not keep wild animals as pets.** Even a raccoon born in captivity may be a rabies carrier. Local laws prohibit acquiring or keeping such animals as pets. There are no approved vaccines or known quarantine for wild animals.

**Spay or neuter pets.** Sterilization reduces the number of unwanted pets that may not be properly cared for or regularly vaccinated.