

Living with Raccoons



Raccoons and other wildlife are a natural part of the environment in San Mateo County and are found in many neighborhoods. It is normal for these animals to pass through properties as they go about their lives among the humans who have moved into their habitat. However, wild animals that lose their fear of people can become a nuisance, destroy property, or even pose a risk to human health. To prevent problems with raccoons and other wildlife, residents must follow a few common-sense precautions.



Keeping Wildlife Wild

Wild animals may visit your property looking for a handout, but they don't really need help from humans to find food. In fact, animals that associate people with food may become aggressive toward humans, putting both their and our safety at risk.

Animals that are fed by humans are also likely to congregate in large numbers, leading to increased disease transmission between animals and from animals to people.

Discouraging Raccoon Visitors

- Never feed wild animals
- Secure garbage and pet food and pick up fallen fruit
- Clear brush and other debris
- Cover children's sandboxes
- Cut back branches that overhang your roof
- Repair holes in your home or shed
- Cover vents with heavy metal screening
- Install animal-proof chimney caps
- Install skirting around decks and porches

Removing Raccoons from Structures

If raccoons have already taken up residence on your property, it may be necessary to seek help from a professional wildlife trapper to remove them. It may also be possible to use noise or other disruptions to encourage animals to leave your property.

Once the raccoon has been removed, it is important to seal off all access points to prevent it or other animals from re-entering, and to remove any other attractants that may be drawing wildlife to your property.

During spring and summer, raccoons may have offspring in their dens. Before sealing off access to a structure, you should always ensure that all animals have moved on. It may be necessary to give a raccoon several nights to relocate its offspring.

Need Help with Urban Wildlife?

If you believe you have a wildlife problem, a San Mateo County Mosquito and Vector Control District technician can inspect your property and provide recommendations for wildlife exclusion and control.

San Mateo County Mosquito and Vector Control District technicians are not able to provide trapping or wildlife exclusion on private property. If you need these services, please contact a qualified pest control operator or other wildlife trapper.





Raccoon Latrines

The sites where raccoons leave their droppings are called latrines. Raccoons often use the same latrine over and over. Latrines are usually found at the base of trees, in forks of trees, or on raised areas such as fallen logs, stumps, or large rocks. Raccoon latrines can also be found on or around woodpiles, decks, porches, rooftops, attics, fireplaces, garages, and haylofts.

Identifying a Raccoon Latrine

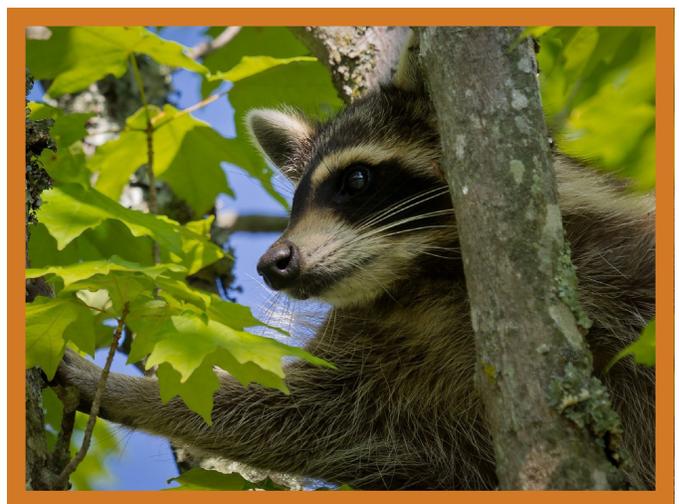
Raccoon droppings look like small dog droppings. They are dark in color, have an unpleasant odor, and often contain undigested seeds or other food items. Because latrines are used repeatedly, there are often older, dry droppings mixed with fresh, wet droppings.

Dangers to Humans and Pets

Raccoon roundworms (*Baylisascaris procyonis*) are parasites that live in raccoon intestines. Raccoon roundworms lay many tiny eggs that are found in raccoon droppings. The eggs are not visible to the naked eye. If raccoon droppings are not properly cleaned up, the eggs mature in the droppings. Even after raccoon droppings are cleaned up, raccoon roundworm eggs may still be present.

Raccoon Roundworm

If accidentally swallowed or inhaled, the raccoon roundworm eggs in raccoon droppings (shown above) can cause serious illness in humans and pets. Although infections are rare, they can lead to irreversible brain, heart, and eye damage. Raccoon roundworm infections can be fatal. Most infections occur in small children between the ages of 9 months and six years, since they often put objects in their mouths.



Before You Start

Always wear protective clothing when cleaning a raccoon latrine!

- Disposable rubber or latex gloves
- Disposable or washable coveralls
- Rubber boots
- NIOSH-Approved Disposable Particulate Respirator that has been fitted to your face

Cleaning an Outdoor Raccoon Latrine

1. Lightly mist the area with water to avoid stirring up dust
2. Gently shovel or scoop droppings into a heavy-duty garbage bag
3. If the latrine is on a pile of wood, dispose of the wood
4. If the latrine is on the ground, remove 2-4" of soil immediately under the droppings and place in heavy-duty garbage bag
5. Close the bag with a twist tie or tape and then put that bag inside a second bag
6. Place bag(s) into trash can
7. Carefully flame the surface soil with a propane torch; turn the soil over with a shovel and re-flame several times
8. Rinse the shovel blade, boots, and other non-disposable clean-up materials with boiling water containing bleach

Cleaning an Indoor Raccoon Latrine

1. Lightly mist the area with water to avoid stirring up dust
2. Gently shovel or scoop droppings into a heavy-duty garbage bag
3. Use hot, soapy water and a damp sponge, mop, paper towels, and/or disposable wipes to wipe up remaining droppings
4. Flush dirty water down the toilet
5. Place sponge, mop head, and all disposable clean-up materials in plastic bag with droppings
6. Close the bag with a twist tie or tape and then put that bag inside a second bag
7. Place bag(s) into trash can
8. Rinse the shovel blade, boots, and other non-disposable clean-up materials with boiling water containing bleach

San Mateo County Mosquito and Vector Control District

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Monday-Friday
8a.m. to 4:30p.m.

www.smcmvcd.org



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