

Raccoon Dog

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Species Description

Scientific name: *Nyctereutes procyonoides*

AKA: tanuki

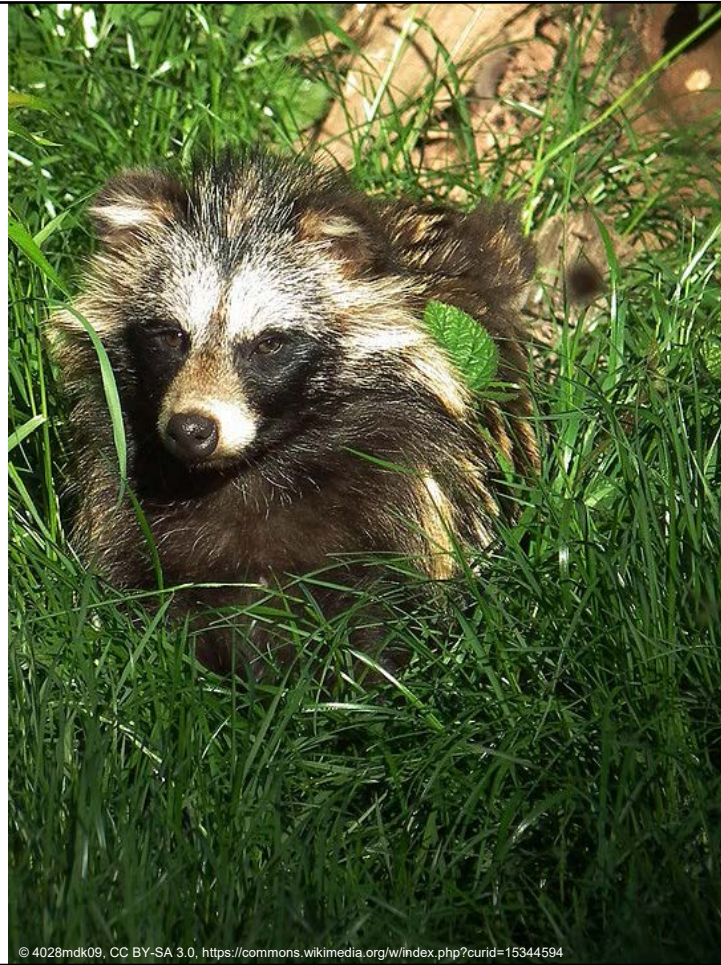
Native to: Northeast Asia

Habitat: Adapted to most habitats, prefer meadows, deciduous and mixed forest

Nyctereutes procyonoides is the size of a fox, but with shorter legs and tail. A relatively elongated body, small head with a short and sharply pointed muzzle and short rounded ears are typical. Body colouration varies from yellow to grey or reddish. Similar to the Raccoon, it has a black facial mask which covers the eyes and cheeks.

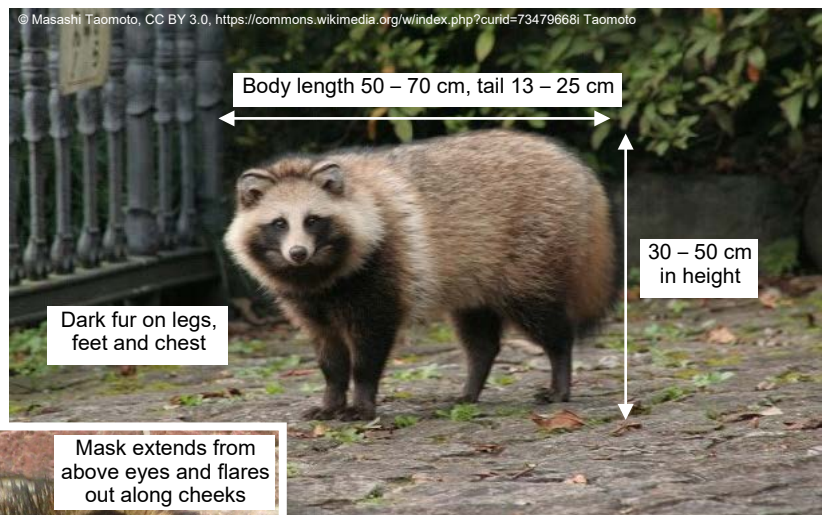
This species originates from Northeast Asia. It was introduced into the former Soviet Union from 1929 to the mid-1950s for the fur trade, natural dispersal and further translocations have since occurred. The species adapted very well to habitats in eastern Europe and spread quickly to northern and western Europe. It is now established in 15 European countries.

Under the Invasive Alien Species (Enforcement and Permitting) Order (Northern Ireland) 2019 it is offence to intentionally keep; breed; transport to, from or within Northern Ireland, use or exchange Raccoon dog; or to release it into the environment.



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Key ID Features



Report any sightings via; CEDaR Online Recording - <https://www2.habitas.org.uk/records/ISI>, iRecord app or Invasive Species Northern Ireland website - <http://invasivespeciesni.co.uk/report-sighting>

Impacts

- N. procyonoides* are opportunistic omnivores, their diet varies geographically and is mainly influenced by availability of food resources. Where they are established they are reported to;
- cause severe damage to biodiversity, in particular on waterfowl colonies, tetraonid birds (e.g. grouse) and frog populations (particularly on islands).
 - out-compete native species such as red fox (*Vulpes vulpes*) and badger (*Meles meles*). They are also very efficient scavengers and may also decrease the availability of carrion affecting densities of other generalist carnivores.
 - are a main vector of rabies in Europe, they also carry sarcoptic mange (skin disease affecting dogs), *Echinococcus multilocularis* and *trichinellosis* (both parasites dangerous for humans). *N. procyonoides* are also often killed by other carnivores (e.g. wolves and dogs) and often settle in badger can result in further disease and parasite transmission.

Field signs

Nyctereutes procyonoides paws have 4 digits



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Procyon lotor paws have 5 digits, front footprint resemble that of a human hand



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Similar Species

Raccoon
Invasive non-native
(*Procyon lotor*)



White lines immediately above and below mask

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Raccoon dog (*N. procyonoides*) and Raccoon (*P. lotor*) may co-occur, both have a superficial resemblance. However the Raccoon has a distinctive ringed tail.



Distinctive tail has 4-7 blackish rings and dark tip

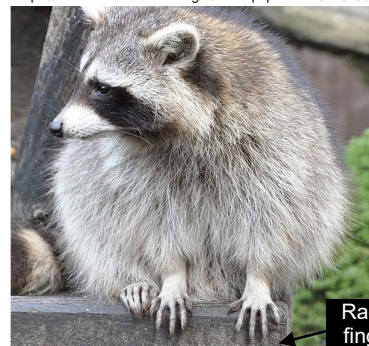
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Posteriorly curved spine giving roundish appearance

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Raccoon has 5 finger like toes

References and further reading:

Dahl, F., Åhlén, P. Nest predation by raccoon dog *Nyctereutes procyonoides* in the archipelago of northern Sweden. *Biol Invasions* 21, 743–755 (2019). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10530-018-1855-4>
CABI datasheet *Nyctereutes procyonoides* (Raccoon dog) available at <https://www.cabi.org/isc/datasheet/72656>
Kowalczyk, R. (2014): NOBANIS – Invasive Alien Species Fact Sheet – *Nyctereutes procyonoides*. – From: Online Database of the European Network on Invasive Alien Species – NOBANIS https://www.nobanis.org/globalassets/speciesinfo/n/nyctereutes-procyonoides/nyctereutes_procyonoides-final.pdf

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