

Raccoon

Procyon lotor

Invasive Species Alert



Photo by Sugoto Roy



Photo by Cary Bass-Deschênes, Wikimedia Commons

Report any raccoon sightings in Northern Ireland via:



Contact NIEA Invasive Non-Native Species Team

invasivespecies@daera-ni.gov.uk

028 9056 9558



For further ID guidance and information check out the
Invasive Species NI website:
invasivespeciesni.co.uk



Why is it a concern?

Under the [Invasive Alien Species \(Enforcement and Permitting\) Order \(Northern Ireland\) 2019](#) it is an offence to intentionally keep; breed; transport to, from or within Northern Ireland, use or exchange a raccoon; or to release it into the environment.

The raccoon is an opportunistic species with a diverse diet which can hunt on the ground, in water and in trees. In areas where raccoons are abundant, their behaviour can have negative impacts on biodiversity, including predation of ground-nesting birds, such as waterfowl, amphibians and other vertebrates. They can carry diseases such as canine distemper or raccoon roundworm (*Baylisascaris procyonis*), which can affect mammals and birds. There is also concern that raccoons could transmit diseases such as rabies and leptospirosis to humans.

How to identify a raccoon?

- Stocky torso and short limbs, 40 – 70 cm in length
- Black eye mask that extends from above eyes and flares out along cheeks, with white lines immediately above and below
- Ringed bushy tail
- Posteriorly curved spine giving roundish appearance
- Feet are pentadactyl (5 toes), with no webbing. Each toe has a sharp curved claw
- Incisors, canines and molars reflect omnivorous habits

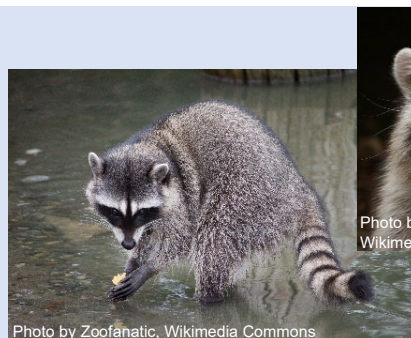


Photo by Fazalmajid, Wikimedia Commons

Photo by Zoofanatic, Wikimedia Commons

Is it present in Northern Ireland?

This species is not established here in the wild. There have been several reports of raccoons in the wild in NI, thought to be escaped from a pet owner, but these were all recovered.

How could it get here?

It could arrive via the pet trade, private ownership or zoos, from which it could escape into the wild

What can I do?

- Follow the [Be Pet Wise](#) guidelines:

Guidance and resources for pet traders and owners are available on our [website](#)

- Report any raccoon sightings to:

[Centre for Environmental Data & Recording \(CEDaR\)](#)

or via the [iRecord App](#)



Report all sightings of raccoons