

## **A Gaze of Raccoons**



If you see a raccoon in your yard during the day, don't panic. It is not necessarily sick or dangerous. It's perfectly normal for raccoons to be active throughout the day. It may merely be foraging longer hours to support her young, visiting a garden while the dogs are indoors, or moving to a new location.

Raccoons are excellent climbers; they are very strong and have very nimble hands. They have no problem entering any attic or chimney they choose, on almost any home. Most of the time, they've chosen an attic or chimney based on convenience or proximity of their home range, 3-5 miles.

It's very common for a female about to bear young to find its way into an attic or chimney. The primary reason a raccoon enters an attic or chimney is so she can give birth to and raise her young until they are able to get around on their own. The good news is that the family will move out on its own, mother raccoons usually move the babies at 12 weeks of age.

Never use smoke or fire to drive animals out of chimneys. You will kill young raccoons not mature enough to climb and may even kill adults. Trapping and moving the family will almost inevitably lead to separation and death of the young.

Waiting things out is often the best option. Gentle harassment may encourage the mother to relocate her young. Choose the right time at dusk right before the mother's normal activity period. Don't drive raccoons out during the day; they may be confused in daylight.

Raccoons dislike bright lights, loud noises and strong odors. Place bright lights in the attic. Place a radio in the attic or chimney. Tune it to loud rock or talk station with the volume set as high as you can. Moth balls or cayenne pepper may also be placed around the attic, but not near the nesting area. **Ammonia should not be used.**

As the human population continues to grow and we continue to develop the open space, animals are constantly losing valuable habitat. This is vital to their survival.

***Living with wildlife philosophy is to provide for the protection of wild species now and in the future. Bernards Township Animal Control promotes harmonious and peaceful coexistence between people and wildlife in our community.***

For additional information, please contact Michelle Santoro, Bernards Township Animal Control Officer – 908-204-3066.



**Bernards Township Health Department**

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