

Northern raccoon (*Procyon lotor*)



Taxonomy:

Family Procyonidae. There are 23 subspecies in North America. The nearest native populations represent the subspecies *Procyon lotor pallidus*.

Description:

Distinguished from the related ringtail by its distinctive facial mask and shorter tail.

Total length: 603-950 mm; Tail: 192-405 mm; Hind foot: 83-138 mm; Ear: 44-50 mm; Weight: 1.8-10.4 kg.



Distribution:

Southern Canada south through most of the continental US (excluding parts of the intermountain west), and south to Central America. Common along the Wasatch Front.

Ecology and diet:

Historically, raccoons appear to have been absent or at least very rare in Utah and elsewhere in the Intermountain region. In recent decades, they have rapidly expanded their range and have become common in northern Utah. Raccoons are often closely associated with human-modified habitats, but they are highly adaptable omnivores with broad ecological tolerances. Their primary habitat requirement is access to permanent water.

Life History:

Mating occurs in the spring. Litters of 3 to 7 young are born after a gestation of 2 months. Cubs are weaned at around 10 weeks, but often remain with the mother through the winter. Raccoons can breed as yearlings. Adult life span in the wild is 5 years on average, but can exceed 16 years.

References: Durrant 1952; Lotze & Anderson 1979; Hall 1981; Zeweloff 1988.