

raccoon *Procyon lotor*

Kingdom: Animalia

Division/Phylum: Chordata

Class: Mammalia

Order: Carnivora

Family: Procyonidae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, native

FEATURES

The raccoon has a head-body length of 16 to 28 inches, and a tail that is eight to 12 inches long. It weighs 15 to 40 pounds. The long, gray-black hair on the back looks grizzled. There is a black line down the middle of its back. It has a broad head with black hair on the face in the shape of a mask. There are five to seven alternating light and dark bands on its long, fluffy tail.

BEHAVIORS

The raccoon may be found statewide in Illinois. It lives in a variety of habitats as long as water, den sites and food are available. It commonly lives in urban areas. The raccoon eats berries, carrion, corn, cottontails, crayfish, fishes, garbage, fruits, insects, mice, nuts, turtles and other items. The front feet are used for finding, gathering and holding food items. A raccoon can climb extremely well and is also a good swimmer. The raccoon makes sounds: growling; trilling; and wailing. Tree cavities are most often used for den sites but barns, attics and brush piles are also used. Breeding occurs between December and May. Young are born March through June after a gestation period of about two months. Litter size averages two to four.

HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

bottomland forests; marshes; peatlands; swamps; wet prairies and fens

Woodland Habitats

bottomland forests; coniferous forests; southern Illinois lowlands; upland deciduous forests

Prairie and Edge Habitats

black soil prairie; dolomite prairie; edge; gravel prairie; hill prairie; sand prairie; shrub prairie

© Illinois Department of Natural Resources. 2017. Biodiversity of Illinois.