

Moose on the Loose!

Imagine walking out of your house and running into this guy, a six foot tall, 1,200 pound moose with a six foot antler span! It may seem strange (and scary!) to those of us not used to living in close proximity to these giants, but for those who live in the northern U.S., Alaska and Canada, it's not that out of the ordinary. According to the Alaska Game & Fish Department, there are about 1,540 moose living in the municipality of Anchorage.

Moose are driven down into lower elevations during the winter where it is easier for them to find food, some of which humans provide, even if not on purpose. Moose have been known to graze on garbage and will return to the same place where they've found food before and if the food they expect to be there is gone, moose can become aggressive. Feeding moose in Montana has become such a problem that it is now illegal and carries a \$1,000 fine if a person is caught doing it. So don't let your trash become a moose's treasure, and let moose eat what they would in the wild - aspen and willow trees, water plants and conifer needles.



Are Moose More Dangerous Than Bears?

Moose are often said to be more dangerous than grizzly bears. In Alaska, moose outnumber bears three to one. Also, people fear moose less than they fear bears, so more people are injured by moose than bears. Moose are not normally aggressive, but can become so if they feel threatened, hungry or harassed by people, dogs or traffic. Bull moose can become more aggressive during the breeding season, September-October. Cow moose are very protective of their calves during late spring and summer. The best way to avoid conflict with a moose is to give it plenty of space. If you do encounter an aggressive moose, quickly walk or run away and try to get behind the nearest obstacle, like a tree or building, for protection.

Raccoons - Everyone's Neighbors

Raccoons are smart, curious animals that have adapted well to living in urban areas. Raccoons weigh 30 to 45 pounds, and are omnivorous, eating fruits, berries, fish, birds and small mammals. They are nocturnal, which often makes it hard to estimate how big an urban population is, because people seldom see them in the daytime.

Raccoons live in urban areas because humans provide food, water and shelter for them. Raccoons are attracted to garbage and pet food. They find shelter in attics, sheds, fire places and crawl spaces found in homes. While it is uncommon, some raccoons have been known to go through dog doors to get inside a house. Raccoons cause substantial damage to houses. Females in search of nesting grounds will rip off shingles, roof top ventilators and fascia boards to get inside an attic. Once they are inside, raccoons tear up insulation, heating and cooling ducts. They will urinate in the attic, causing an odor and leaving a stain on the ceiling. Outside, raccoons can do damage to gardens and landscaping by eating the plants. They can tip over and dig through trash cans easily, leaving a mess. Occasionally, raccoons attack humans. For these reasons, raccoons are

often thought of as a nuisance or pest.

To keep raccoons away from your home, secure all garbage cans, feed pets inside your home or remove all excess food between feedings. Never feed raccoons! Secure all openings to your house, especially on the roof, so that they are not able to get in.



“Raccoons in the park do follow people and look for handouts, and they do bite people on a regular basis.” – *Canada - CBC News*

