Living With Raccoons in Hillsborough

The Hillsborough Township Health Department has been receiving an increasing number of complaints and concerns regarding the presence of raccoons on residents’ property and the rummaging through their trash bins. In Hillsborough, raccoons feed on food disposed in personal and commercial trash bins and are attracted by the scent of leftover and discarded food.

Background Information On Raccoons

- Raccoons are native to all environments in North America, as long as there is water nearby. (Woodlands, Urban and Rural Communities)
- Raccoons are nocturnal.
- Raccoons can carry known zoonotic diseases such as Rabies and Roundworm.
- In residential neighborhoods, raccoons are attracted to birdseed, garbage, pet foods and garden crop. In an agricultural environment, they eat corn, fruit and poultry.

Control Methods

There are various methods to dissuade a raccoon from vandalizing your property. Listed below are ways to prevent raccoons from becoming property pests.

Prevent Raccoons from getting into your trash

- Keep garbage indoors as long as possible.
- Use wildlife-proof garbage containers.
- Anchor your garbage container and lid securely.

Prevent Raccoons from eating your garden

- Be aware of the raccoon’s diet. (enjoys sweet food, such as corn or watermelon)
- An electric fence is recommended as a deterrent to keep raccoons out.

Prevent Raccoons from eating your birdseed

- Hang bird feeders on wire between trees.
- Use feeders that capture fallen seed or minimize spillage.
- Resist feeding birds between April and November, when alternate sources are readily available.

Remember that raccoons are wild animals, and you should keep your distance from them regardless of their health or behavioral status. Although an attack from a healthy animal is rare, it may occur in instances where it feels threatened. If the wild raccoon appears sick, avoiding contact is prioritized. In the event where contact is made, (bitten or scratched) clean the area with soap and water, and consult your doctor as soon as possible, followed by the Hillsborough Health Department and the Police Department. This includes situations where no obvious injuries are sustained.

If your pet comes into contact with a sick or potentially rabid raccoon, consult your veterinarian immediately. If contact with your pet can be avoided, do so. If not, handle your pet using gloves and protective clothing, as to stop the spread of the disease. The rabies virus does need a host to survive but can remain on hair, skin, and saliva for up to two hours.
The link for Fish, Game and Wildlife is https://www.state.nj.us/dep/fgw/

Another good link for dealing with local property pests is https://wildlifehelp.org/