

Name _____



What Is a Raccoon's Life Cycle Like?

Raccoons go through several stages in their life cycle, from tiny kits to fully grown adults. Let's take a closer look at how raccoons grow and change throughout their lives.

Raccoons are born in the spring, usually between March and June. A mother raccoon gives birth to a litter of 2 to 5 kits after a gestation period of about 63 days. When they are born, the kits are small, blind, and completely dependent

on their mother for survival. They rely on her for warmth, milk, and protection from predators.

At around three weeks old, the kits' eyes begin to open, and they start to explore their surroundings. By the time they are two months old, the kits are ready to leave the den with their mother. She teaches them important skills, such as climbing trees, finding food, and staying safe. The kits continue to stay close to their mother until they are about four to six months old.

As the young raccoons grow, they become more independent. By the fall, they leave their mother and begin to establish their own territories. Young raccoons often stay together in small groups for a short time before going their separate ways. At around one year of age, raccoons are considered adults and can start having kits of their own.

In the wild, raccoons typically live for two to three years, although some can live longer if they avoid predators and find enough food. In captivity, where raccoons are safe and well-fed, they can live up to 20 years. The challenges raccoons face in the wild, such as predators, disease, and food shortages, make survival more difficult.

Each stage of a raccoon's life is important for learning and growth. From being cared for as kits to becoming independent adults, raccoons show their adaptability and intelligence. Their life cycle highlights the importance of a mother's care and the skills raccoons need to survive in the wild.