

ROBBERT RACCOON AND THE PANDEMIC RECKONING

On a daily basis Robbert Raccoon visits my bird-feeding station to clean up what the birds leave behind on the ground at the end of the day. After all, someone has to do it, and we cannot always rely on Patty Opossum. Usually, Robbert visits after dark and I never see his clean-up detailing. This morning, however, a half-hour after sunrise, he appeared out of the woods and began his customary clean-up operation. I had just filled the bird feeders and there was already bird seed on the ground, ready for the mourning doves and the blackbirds. They gave Robbert plenty of room and would not go near him as he ate the food intended for them. (He was much bigger than any of them.)

If you have ever watched a raccoon pick up food and eat, you know that they are very meticulous. While he was glancing around for danger, his front paws were carefully feeling the seed on top of the loose dirt under the feeder, and he would sniff out the peanuts and sunflower seeds and pick them up with his paws or his tongue. When he had eaten all the easy-to-find food on the top of the ground, Robbert began to dig down into the loose soil to find and eat any seeds that may have worked their way down into the ground. Since we had had rain recently, the ground was a bit muddy, and his front feet were soon covered with mud. He did not find much of anything down in the soil, so he gave up looking and went over to the stone bird bath on the ground and cleaned off his front paws in the water. He then went on his way back into the woods.

According to the guidelines set forth by the CDC regarding the Covid-19 pandemic, Robbert Raccoon followed protocol to the letter:

1. Wash Your Hands-----CHECK!
2. Watch Your Social Distancing: Maintain 6' apart-----CHECK!!
3. Wear a Mask-----CHECK!!!

(That last one was easy!)

“Wait. What? How can I smell the food and eat it if I have to wear a mask over my nose and mouth???”

Carol Hadley Hils