



## Payson Raccoon

We've told you many stories about human cruelty to wildlife but there are many more stories of human kindness. This is one such story. It begins with a retired gentleman living in a quiet community in Payson. One of the great joys of his retirement is watching the raccoons that live nearby. Overtime he has gradually learned to recognize each and every one of them. One day, a new little fellow appeared at his door, hungry, thirsty and horribly injured. He had bite marks all over his face, had lost his tail and, as we would later discover, both his hind legs were broken. It appeared a dog had mauled him. He was desperately hungry and, to make matters worse, the resident raccoons chased him away whenever he tried to eat. He knew this little raccoon would never survive. He didn't want to call the wildlife agency because he knew they would kill him. So he set out to capture him and try to save his life. He set a cage trap and placed food near it. Each day, he would place the food closer to the trap. This went on for weeks until he finally placed the food in the trap. By then, the raccoon was not afraid and headed straight in the trap to eat. He was finally and mercifully caught.

The gentleman took him to vets in his area but nobody wanted to treat a raccoon. Finally, he called Southwest Wildlife. With love and tenderness, he brought his raccoon friend to Southwest where the severity of his injuries was discovered. His bite wounds were badly infected and although our veterinarians could fix one leg, they couldn't fix the other leg. Linda gently explained to the gentleman that the little raccoon would not be releasable. He said he understood but when it was time to leave the raccoon, he cried. He was leaving a friend behind whom he loved. The raccoon was treated for his injuries and is doing well except for a slight limp. His friend from Payson comes to visit routinely and the raccoon knows him each and every time. Although he cannot be released, the little raccoon is growing up healthy and lives with other non-releasable raccoons and, in addition, he has his human friend who never fails to visit him. This makes for a very happy raccoon. You can just tell.