Based on [fossil](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fossil) evidence from France and Germany, the first known members of the family [*Procyonidae*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Procyonidae) lived in Europe in the late [Oligocene](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oligocene) about 25 million years ago.[[20]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Raccoon" \l "cite_note-20) Similar tooth and skull structures suggest procyonids and [weasels](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mustelidae) share a common ancestor, but molecular analysis indicates a closer relationship between raccoons and bears.[[21]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Raccoon#cite_note-21) After the then-existing species crossed the [Bering Strait](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bering_Strait) at least six million years later in the early [Miocene](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Miocene), the center of its distribution was probably in Central America.[[22]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Raccoon#cite_note-22) [Coatis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coati) (*Nasua* and *Nasuella*) and raccoons (*Procyon*) have been considered to share common descent from a species in the genus *Paranasua* present between 5.2 and 6.0 million years ago.[[23]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Raccoon#cite_note-23) This assumption, based on morphological comparisons of fossils, conflicts with a 2006 genetic analysis which indicates raccoons are more closely related to [ringtails](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bassariscus).[[24]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Raccoon#cite_note-24)Unlike other procyonids, such as the [crab-eating raccoon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crab-eating_raccoon) (*Procyon cancrivorus*), the ancestors of the common raccoon left [tropical](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tropics) and [subtropical](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Subtropics) areas and migrated farther north about 2.5 million years ago, in a migration that has been confirmed by the discovery of fossils in the [Great Plains](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great_Plains) dating back to the middle of the [Pliocene](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pliocene).[[25]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Raccoon#cite_note-25) Its most recent ancestor was likely *Procyon rexroadensis*, a large [Blancan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blancan) raccoon from the [Rexroad Formation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rexroad_Formation) characterized by its narrow back teeth and large lower jaw.[[26]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Raccoon#cite_note-kurten1980-26)