

## The Raccoon Called Sjupp

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RSxV1AX0nt0>

### Full English Transcript:

Just like your friendly neighbourhood fox, raccoons live in many towns across Northern America.

These habitats, which are places where animals and plants live together, are very different from the places where raccoons would normally live, being the tree tops in woodlands. Despite this, however, raccoons have made a success of their new urban lifestyle choices.

Carl Linnaeus was given a raccoon by the Crown Prince of Sweden because it was generally being a nuisance of itself in the royal palace. He named this raccoon Sjupp. Linnaeus was very fond of his raccoon and spent an exceptional amount of time studying him, with a particular interest in how Sjupp interacted with his habitat.

Raccoons are nocturnal animals, meaning they are active at night. As such, Linnaeus noticed Sjupp had very bad eye sight because there was no need for vision when locating food in the dark. Instead, Sjupp had an excellent sense of smell and touch.

Sjupp could detect smells as faint as raisins or almonds in the pockets of Linnaeus's students, which often resulted in the raccoon attacking their legs until they surrendered their food.

Sjupp also once attacked the gardener's leg in search of food. The gardener was taken by surprise and shook Sjupp off. Linnaeus observed that after this incident, Sjupp considered the gardener to be a natural enemy and would make a noise like a seagull whenever he was near - a sure sign that he was angry.

The things that Linnaeus observed about Sjupp explain how raccoons are suited to their habitat. Understanding the habitat that an animal lives in is as important as understanding what it eats and how it finds or hunts for its food.

Not all animals such as raccoons are able to survive in habitats that are very different from where they would normally live. Animals like polar bears are so well suited to living in the cold conditions of the Arctic Circle, with their fatty bodies and thick fur to keep them warm, that they would certainly die from overheating if placed in a hot country.

Linnaeus knew that habitats were not only important to animals but also to plants, and so he named many of them after where they were found. Plants with the word Alpina in their name are found in Alp-like conditions, whilst plants with the word Arctica in their name are found in arctic-like conditions.

One night Sjupp broke loose and met his unfortunate end as he strayed into a new habitat – the neighbour's back garden – only to be attacked and killed by a big dog. After searching for several days Linnaeus found him.

Of course Linnaeus was very sad to see that Sjupp had died, but as a scientist, this did not stop him from chopping the raccoon up to see what else he could learn.