## The River Rat and the Ring-tailed Raccoon

Can you find 104 Letter R,r? Can you find the word 'River, river' 15 times?

The Ring-tailed Raccoon was the Ruler of the River. He came out at night and claimed the best slugs and bugs. The other animals of the forest got the leftovers.

One night, a hungry River Rat wandered into the river bed area, looking for insects.

Now, the Ring-tailed Raccoon thought he was more important than a River Rat rodent.

"Dear Fellow," he said, "Clearly, I am the better Ruler of the River.

"I agree", said the River Rat, meekly. "Only one of us can be the Ruler of the River.

Now, the River Rat was more clever than he looked. "Why don't we have a race to decide who rules the river?" he suggested.

The raccoon was a fast runner and thought this was a great idea.

The Black-winged **R**aven came to judge. The forest animals gathered to watch the **r**ace.

"On Your Marks – Get Set - GO!" cawed the Raven.

The Ring-tailed Raccoon bolted off the starting line and was halfway to the finish line. But the River Rat just sat. He could hear the laughter of the Raccoon far away.

Suddenly, 'SPLASH', the **River Rat** jumped in the **river** and was a streak of lightning down the stream.

The Raccoon hurried but the River Rat emerged from the water at the finish line, wet, but victorious. "River Rats are the fastest *swimmers*!" he cried.

The Ring-tailed Raccoon knew he had been tricked and went away sad, but wiser.

The new Ruler of the River let all the animals share the food from the waters of the River.

And, there was enough for everyone.

THE END!

### **Did You Know River Rats**

- are also called Coypu and Nutria, according to where they live
- originally from South America
- Were brought to Europe, Asia, and North America for fur trade
- have huge, wide, long, orange front teeth
- can weigh up to 20 pounds; over 20 inches long and a 15-inch tail
- are mammal rodents
- have webbed toes
- eat water plants (herbivores)
- are nocturnal (come out at night)

## Did You Know the Ring-tailed Raccoon

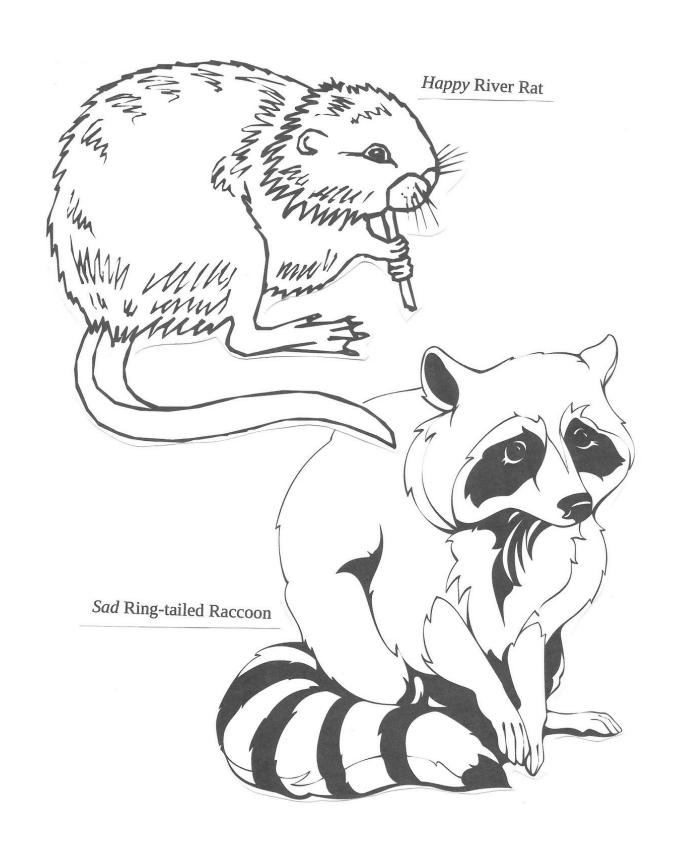
- Are native to North America and Mexico
- usually the size of a small dog (biggest recorded was 60 pounds)
- Are from a Native American word: "one who rubs and scrubs and scratches with his hands.
- Are fast runners and tree climbers
- Are omnivores (eat both meat and plants)
- live in woodlands by water and in cities
- are nocturnal
- Are closely related to bears
- Dip their food in water (not to wash it) but to get it wet and chewable

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#### True/False Quiz

See the Story and Did You Know for answers

1. The River Rat and the Ring-tailed Raccoon were friends. 2. The Raccoon did not want to share food with his neighbors. 3. The Raccoon thought he was more important than a River Rat. 4. The River Rat is called other names, like Coypu and Nutria. 5. The Ring-tailed Raccoon has orange teeth. 6. Bears are a near relative to the River Rat. 7. *Omnivores* eat both meat and plants. 8. Both the River Rat and the Ring-tailed Raccoon are *nocturnal*. 9. It was fair for the River Rat to win the race by swimming instead of running. 10. Herbivores eat only meat.



Draw these faces to show emotion. Make up your own.

