

3.6.2007

Herr Becker!

Mein Name ist Juka  
Anderson, ich stamme aus  
Kassel, wir wohnen aber schon  
viele Jahre in USA.  
Unbekannter Weise möchte ich  
durch einen Zeitungsausschnitt  
aus unserer Zeitung senden,  
ich dachte es würde Sie  
interessieren das wir auf  
diese Weise von den Wasch-  
bären in Kassel gelesen haben.  
In unserer Gegend gibt es  
diese Tiere auch, genannt "Raccoon"  
aber nicht in großen Mengen.

Mit freundlichen Grüßen  
Juka Anderson



Erika Anderson  
251 Kemron Pointe Dr.  
Colonial Hgts., VA 23834-2177

USA

04 JUN 2007 PM 4 37

RICHMOND VA 23



Herr  
Frank Becker  
Alt Wahlershausen 4  
Forstbetrieb  
34131 Kassel

Schwartz

50143/0001

Postnet barcode

# Germany in the grips of 'Nazi raccoons'

Invasive species took hold after fur farm released them in '30s

THE WASHINGTON POST

**KASSEL, Germany** — In 1934, top Nazi party official Hermann Goering received a seemingly mundane request from the Reich Forestry Service. A fur farm near here was seeking permission to release a batch of exotic bushy-tailed critters into the wild to "enrich the local fauna" and give bored hunters something new to shoot at.

Goering approved the request and unwittingly uncorked an ecological disaster that is still spreading across Europe. The imported North American species, *Procyon lotor*, or the common raccoon, quickly took a liking to the forests of central Germany. Encountering no natural predators — and with hunters increasingly called away by World War II — the woodland creatures fruitfully multiplied and have stymied all attempts to prevent them from overtaking the Continent.

Today, as many as 1 million raccoons are estimated to live in Germany, and their numbers are steadily increasing.

Raccoons have crawled across the border to infest each of Germany's neighbors and now range from the Baltic Sea to the Alps. Scientists say they have been spotted as far east as Chechnya. British tabloids have warned that it's only a matter of time until the "Nazi raccoons" cross the English Channel.

For the most part, the raccoons haven't disrupted the natural order of things in the forests. Rather, the biggest impact has been on humans. Complaints are soaring about fearless raccoons that penetrate homes and destroy property.

The Germans call them *Waschbaeren*, or "wash bears," because they habitually wash their paws and douse their food



CRAIG WHITLOCK/THE WASHINGTON POST

**Trapper Frank Becker holds a young raccoon he caught on a client's roof in Kassel, Germany. The animals, native to North America, may number as many as 1 million throughout Europe.**

in water. And no place in Germany has more of them than Kassel, a city of about 200,000 people in the central state of Hesse.

For the mask-faced mammals, it has plenty of leafy suburban backyards that border large tracts of public forests. The city lies less than 20 miles from the Nazi fur farm that is usually blamed for Germany's raccoon explosion.

For now, the city limits its efforts to handing out pamphlets urging residents to secure their

garbage and compost heaps, two prime feeding areas. Those tormented by the varmints have two options: deal with the problem themselves or call a private trapper such as Frank Becker.

Trapping is usually just a temporary fix, however; Becker said it's just a matter of time before more raccoons move into the neighborhood. As a result, he said, he concentrates on selling home-security systems that zap creatures seeking to force their way in.