



## Playing a Waiting Game: Raccoon slows tree cutting progress

By Mark Hiller, 04/14 2016, US

**WILKES-BARRE, LUZERNE COUNTY (WBRE/WYOU)** -- What started as a relatively simple tree removal project at Kirby Park on Thursday got a whole lot more complicated. High in the tree, a raccoon refused to leave. "I can't believe it. I can't believe that he was living inside that tree. And he's pretty big," said Brandy Benjamin of Wilkes-Barre who watched the events unfold.

A tree cutting crew removed large pieces of the diseased silver maple tree first thing in the morning when the raccoon bolted from a section then scampered high onto a branch. Crews trimmed other areas of the tree while the seemingly frightened animal remained frozen in its tracks. "I don't want him to fall, you know what I mean and end up killing himself because he's so scared," said Ms. Benjamin.

Despite the tree limbs disappearing and the sound of a chipper, the raccoon barely budged. It's hardly moved on a branch where it perched itself and it couldn't go much farther because of the animal's weight.

Wilkes-Barre Animal Control Officer Ed McDade told Eyewitness News he believes the raccoon may not be a "he" but rather a protective mom. "They're nocturnal. They shouldn't even be out now. She should be in that tree sleeping with the babies -- if there are or not."

As for rescuing the raccoon or coaxing it down, John Domin of Edwardsville had a suggestion. "I would say they have to get some kind of a rope structure or something," he said. "A snare or some manner like that to get the animal in a secure place." Ms. Benjamin added, "Oh, I just hope it works out good."

Animal control says the raccoon jumped to another tree Thursday afternoon near the one that's being cut down after an attempt was made to snare the animal. The plan changed to give the raccoon a chance during the night to leave on its own and hope she would gather up any of her young and move elsewhere.