

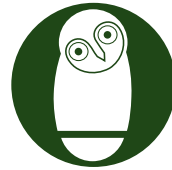


HUMAN-SKUNK CONFLICTS

- Skunks are normally crepuscular animals (active at dawn and dusk) so the potential for human-skunk interaction is low.
- Skunks can cause considerable damage to lawns while digging for grubs and other insects.
- Dogs are often what triggers a spraying incident with a skunk. Keeping your dog on leash and under control will minimize the chances for an unpleasant encounter.
- While skunks have the potential to carry rabies, there have been no cases of rabies found in skunks in BC.
- Spray from a skunk, while foul smelling, is not a vector for transmitting disease.
- Skunks may transmit distemper to dogs so it is important to have your dog checked by a vet if it receives a bite or a scratch from a skunk.
- Children should be taught not to approach any wildlife; serious bites and scratches may result from an encounter with a skunk.



British Columbia Conservation Foundation



The BC Conservation Foundation is a not-for-profit, registered charity that has been working in BC since 1969. To learn more about our organization please visit us at www.bccf.com

WildSafeBC is funded through partnerships throughout BC.

Core funding is made possible through the

BC Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy.

To report wildlife in conflict contact the Conservation Officer Service:

1.877.952.7277



Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy

www.wildsafebc.com

Version 1.0 -2018



STRIPED SKUNK



British Columbia Conservation Foundation





MANAGE YOUR ATTRACTANTS

Skunks can cause considerable damage to lawns and if they spray around your property, life can be unpleasant for quite some time.

1. **Keep all garbage securely** stored until the day of collection. Placing garbage at the curb before collection day is just inviting trouble with skunks and other wildlife.
2. **Feed pets indoors**, or if fed outdoors, bring in any feed that is not immediately eaten by your pets.
3. **Take birdfeeders down until winter**. While striped skunks are not skilled climbers, they will eat spilled seed.
4. **Keep pet doors locked at night**. Skunks may enter homes through pet doors if they feel they can get a meal on the other side of a pet door.
5. **Prevent skunks from denning under your house** or outbuildings by sealing up any holes or potential entrances. This is best done before March, or after August, to avoid separating family units that may already be inside.
6. **Make your yard** uninviting to skunks through the use of motion activated sprinklers and lights. While this won't deter a motivated skunk, it may be enough to move the animal along if it is its first visit to your property.

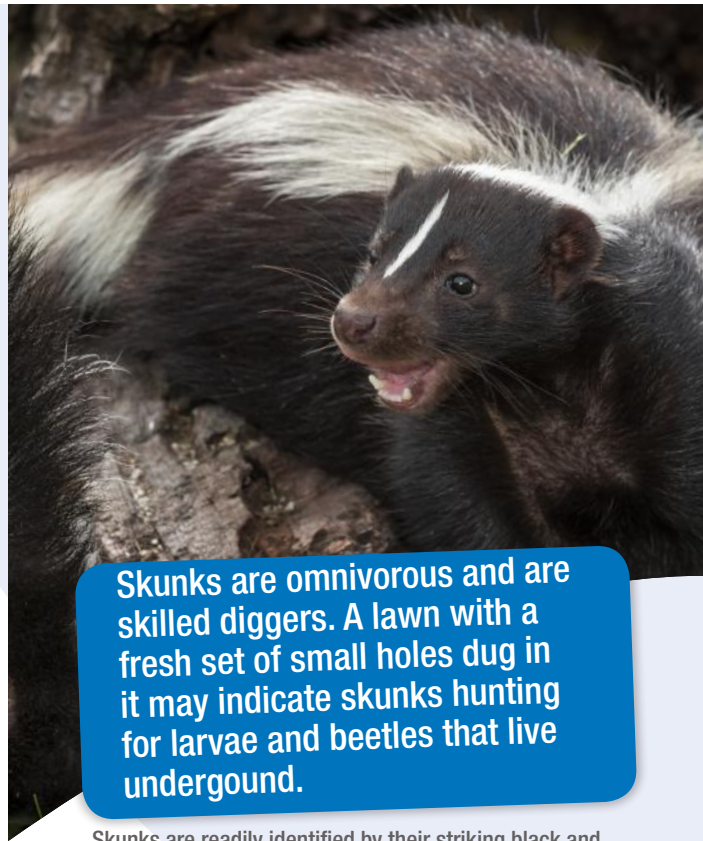
! SKUNK SAFETY

The greatest threat from a skunk is being sprayed by its very potent musk. While eastern skunks have tested positive for rabies, there has never been a confirmed case of skunk-transmitted rabies recorded in BC.

Keep dogs on a leash and do not allow them to provoke a skunk.

Skunks are most active at dusk and dawn so ensure skunks are not present if you let your dog out at night.

Skunks spray as a means of defense only, so the best way to avoid getting sprayed is to avoid scaring a skunk. Skunks often will warn of an impending spray by hissing, stamping their feet, rising up on their front feet, and arching their back in a U shape - at this point it is best to retreat!



Skunks are omnivorous and are skilled diggers. A lawn with a fresh set of small holes dug in it may indicate skunks hunting for larvae and beetles that live underground.

Skunks are readily identified by their striking black and white colouring. They measure 50-72 centimetres from nose to tail and weigh between 2-3.5 kilograms. Females tend to be approximately 10% smaller than males.

Skunks are opportunistic omnivores, feeding on an extremely varied diet; grubs, beetles and other insects are a large part of their diet during the summer months.

Skunks are born in early May, blind and are nearly hairless. They take about three weeks to gain their sight and another five weeks before they are ready to leave the den. Young skunks disperse from the family unit in the fall and become sexually mature at a year of age.

Skunks have few regular predators save for hawks and owls and their populations can grow quickly if good food and weather permit. While coyotes, foxes, wolves and the wild felines will attack a skunk if desperate - they are not typically targeted owing to the skunk's powerful defensive spray.

Typically skunks are short-lived, managing only two to three years in the wilds but can live for up to ten years in captivity.

! WHERE'S THE SKUNK?

Visit our website at www.wildsafebc.com to find a map that shows where skunks have been sighted in your community along with information about what has attracted them into the area. By knowing where skunks are and what is attracting them, we can all do our part to keep wildlife wild and our communities safe.

www.wildsafebc.com



SKUNK FACTS:

- There are two types of skunks in BC. striped skunks, found throughout most of the province (except for Vancouver Island, Haida Gwaii, and many coastal islands), and the spotted skunk which is limited to the lower mainland.
- Striped skunks are housecat-sized members of the same family as weasels. They are known for their vivid black-and-white coat and their strong musk, which is capable of being sprayed up to 6m as a defense mechanism.
- Skunks retreat to their dens during the winter months but are not true hibernators.
- Skunks may share dens for over-wintering and as many as twenty skunks have been reported to share one den.
- Skunks prefer dens already excavated by other animals, or under existing crevices beneath porches or buildings.
- Skunks are crepuscular, meaning they are most active around dawn and dusk, and tend to sleep away the daylight hours.
- Skunks breed in the late winter or early spring months, and females give birth to litters of 4-7 "kits" in early May.
- Striped skunks are not skilled climbers, but spotted skunks are.



www.wildsafebc.com