

Skunk Removal and Control

Skunks are usually classified as a pest species due to their odor, and occasionally, digging. The most common complaints include the following:

- Skunk is living under deck or porch
- Skunk has sprayed in the vicinity
- Skunk has sprayed a pet dog
- Skunks are digging holes in yard
- Skunks fell down window well/basement



For these reasons, many people wish to have this nuisance animal trapped and removed. However, trappers must take care to avoid being sprayed.

SKUNK REMOVAL: Your best bet is to trap the skunks in live cage traps, and relocate them. It's actually pretty easy to do, and safer and more effective than trying to kill the skunks. You may be worried about the skunk spraying you, but it's really easy to avoid that. And just so you know, there is absolutely no skunk repellent spray (ironic!) powder, or device that'll keep them away. But if you trap them and relocate them at least five miles from your property, that should solve the problem. You can either hire a professional to do so for you (laws may prevent you from doing it yourself anyway) and that way you don't have to worry about getting sprayed.

SKUNK PREVENTION: Of course, you can help prevent skunks from using your property. They are often drawn to live under decks, porches, sheds and such. You need to install an exclusion barrier around the perimeter of the deck, so that they can't crawl under. And of course, don't leave out pet food, or any other food that will attract skunks.

SKUNK BIOLOGY: The Striped Skunk (*Mephitis mephitis*) weighs from 4-10 pounds and is 24-30 inches long. Skunks are easy to recognize with their distinct black and white coloring. The Striped Skunk has two white bands that run from the head and down each side of the back. They do not form long partnerships, and mate in late February, and young are born in May. A litter may be five or six young. They follow the mother around, and after they are a year old, they depart to live on their own. Most die during their first winter. They usually only live 2-4 years in the wild, but can live more than a dozen years in captivity.

There are other skunk species as well, such as the **Eastern Spotted Skunk** (*Spilogale putorius*) which is smaller but similar in behavior. These skunks will actually perform a handstand when spraying.

SKUNK BEHAVIOR: Skunks are mostly nocturnal, and forage at night for a variety of foods. They are omnivores, eating both plant and animal matter, but really seem to prefer insects. They sleep during the day, usually in underground dens often dug by other animals. They do not fully hibernate, but activity is very low during the winter. They often communicate via scent marking, and males will often discharge during mating season. Skunks are well-known for their defensive tactic - when threatened, they will arch their back, lift the tail, and discharge a highly odiferous liquid from special glands near the anus. This sulphurous compound is not only offensive to the nose, but it can cause temporary blindness in an

attacker. Many animals avoid skunks due to this defensive tactic, and it's actually often birds like hawks and owls that prey on skunks, since these birds lack a sense of smell.

HOW DO I GET RID OF SKUNK SMELL? If you or your pet (usually a dog) is sprayed by a skunk, don't bother with the old tomato juice bath. It doesn't help. The best way to get rid of the smell is to combine hydrogen peroxide, baking soda, and liquid dish soap, and immediately shampoo the dog (or person) with that. If sprayed in the eyes, flush them with water.

MIX THESE INGREDIENTS TO REMOVE SKUNK SPRAY ODOR



NUISANCE CONCERNS: One of the largest concerns is the odor. Skunks very frequently inhabit human dwellings. They'll live under sheds, porches, decks, etc. They may discharge or scent mark these areas, creating an unpleasant odor. Many people don't like skunks on the property, because of fear of stumbling across one and getting sprayed. There's also the matter of pet/skunk conflict. Skunks often fall down basement window wells as well. In addition, they can actually do a lot of digging, and damage a lawn.

SKUNK DISEASES: Skunks are frequent carriers of rabies. I don't know if they carry any other diseases that humans or pets can get.