

SKUNKS

DID YOU KNOW?

Skunks are one of the most commonly misunderstood wild animals

When treated with respect and granted appropriate space, they are gentle, harmless creatures that would rather be left alone.

DID YOU KNOW?

Spraying is a last resort.

If the bold, black-and-white colouration of the skunk doesn't discourage a potential attacker, the skunk will still provide ample warning before spraying.

When threatened, a striped skunk will raise its tail and repeatedly stamp its forefeet on the ground. If the message is not clear, the skunk curves its body into a "U" so that it can see its target as it expels a noxious, yellow fluid. This is a perfect defense mechanism.

The spray has a maximum range of about 6 m, and a skunk is accurate for half that distance.

HELP!

Is there a skunk under the deck?

Skunks have adapted to a wide variety of habitats and food sources. They prefer open areas, thick brush, and forest edges over dense forest habitats. They may choose to live under foundations, porches, decks, sheds, or woodpiles. In the winter, skunks usually find hollow logs or groundhog holes, or dig burrows in which to nestle.

TRY THIS!

To close off an entry hole under a porch, deck, or shed, dig a trench around the perimeter. Place galvanized-steel screening (2.5 cm x 2.5 cm) into the trench, bend it outward at the bottom, and fill the trench. Leave an opening large enough to allow the animals to escape. To monitor when the animals leave, place a barrier (e.g., large ball of paper or soil) into the exit hole. Check the opening after sunset to determine whether or not the barrier has been removed. Also, look for footprints.

Ensure that all of the animals have gone before closing an entry hole permanently. Place a bit of food inside the hole so that only an animal inside could get it. Cover the hole with wire mesh so that it can be easily removed to check if an animal is left inside. If the food remains untouched for several days, you have been successful.

Do not attempt to remove skunks in the winter or spring. Babies are born in May and will be at least eight weeks-of-age before they are seen out with their mothers.

