

DISCOURAGING SKUNKS

- Remove or enclose wood, brush and compost piles. Thin dense vegetation to reduce wildlife hiding places. If you have fruit trees or a vegetable garden, remove all fallen, ripened fruit and vegetables regularly. Create a 12 to 18 inch clearance of space under hedges & bushes to reduce rodent hiding places.
- The crawl space screens should be a 16 gauge or better wire mesh sandwiched between the 2 frames then screwed in place instead of using staples and nails.
- Speak to your local nursery about control of insects and grubs skunks love to eat. The health of your garden is dependent on many of the small micro fauna and insects under the soil and in the garden. In some cases the use of beneficial nematodes may reduce the presence of grubs that attract some wild mammals.
- Use motion activated devices such as strobe lights and sprinklers to discourage wildlife from entering your garden. (*Caution: strobe light can trigger seizures in people with epilepsy*)
- Fill or cover any holes under sheds, decks or other structures that may provide a home for skunks.
- Unlike their cousin the Spotted skunk, Striped skunks are poor climbers and often enter through gaps in and around fences and gates. Add a footer beneath fences, sheds, and foundations. Close off gaps under decks.

Skunk Benefits

Skunks do a great job at keeping down rodents and insects that could be harmful for agricultural. They will eat rats, mice, moles, black widow spiders, scorpions, carrion, crickets and other insects as well. Should the opportunity present itself, they will also eat gophers, ground squirrels.

Common Q&A

- **What should I do if I encounter a skunk?** Make very slow, deliberate movements away from the skunk. Do not run or move quickly as they are easily frightened and sudden movement may cause them to spray. Skunks have poor eye sight so they might not even see you if you are 25 feet away
- **What should I do if the skunk sprays me, my pet or in my house?** Wash thoroughly with cool water if sprayed in the eyes. To reduce the odor on hair, skin, There are many home remedies or products on the market designed to eliminate skunk odors, but it may take several treatments. You may find some of these remedies on the internet or by contacting your veterinarian.

Tip: If you're not sure whether a wild animal is currently under a house or shed, lay a thin layer of white flour in front of the opening, hole or space in question. Check the spot several times during the night. When animal tracks are seen leading away from the spot, you can secure the screen or hole. You may need to repeat this if there is more than one animal.



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http://www.laanimalservices.com/About_Animals/Wildlife.htm

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Harbor Shelter

957 N Gaffey Street
San Pedro, CA 90731

East Valley Shelter

14409 Vanowen Street
Los Angeles, CA 91405

West Valley Shelter

20655 Plummer Street
Chatsworth, CA 91311

South LA Shelter

1850 W 60th Street
Los Angeles, CA 90047

West LA Shelter

11361 W Pico Boulevard
Los Angeles, CA 90064

ENCOUNTERS WITH...

SKUNKS



Photo Courtesy Chris Fowler

**City of Los Angeles
Department of
Animal Services
Wildlife Division**



UNIQUE AMONG ANIMALS

You may have experienced skunks without ever seeing any. It is not that uncommon to have a skunk's strong and musky odor permeate the air around our homes and find unusual holes in the lawn, which are telltale signs of a skunk's nighttime forays. Skunks are wide-spread and very successful animals that are able to survive in many different environments. They can be found throughout the United States, Canada, and Mexico. Skunks are small, furred mammals belonging to a family of animals known as Mustelidae which includes badgers, ferrets, martens, minks, otters, weasels and wolverines. The Genus name for skunk is Mephitis, which is Latin for "bad odor".

A Skunk's Life

Skunks owe their well deserved reputation to the two scent glands located on either side of their anus. These scent glands are a powerful defense against attack, and most animals will tangle with a skunk only once. Skunks are regularly preyed upon by coyotes and owls. Skunks are nocturnal, omnivorous and opportunistic. In the nighttime they can be found foraging in gardens and lawns for insects, fruit, vegetables, amphibians, bird's eggs and many other food items. They relish snails, grubs and small rodents, among many other common garden pests. Skunks are secretive and solitary, and although they prefer to flee if approached, they may also stand their ground if and spray if threatened.

Mating is February to early April. Males are polygamous and mate with multiple females. If the first pregnancy fails the female may have a second estrous where delayed implantation is probably involved. Gestation is 62 to 66 days, and litters of 2 to 7 are born in April to June. The young are born deaf & blind, covered with hair, with the black and white pattern visible. They open their eyes around three weeks & nurse until about 6-10 weeks old. Once weaned, they follow their mother and break from the family about a year after reaching adult size. Females are sexually mature at 9 to 12 months of age. The lifespan of a skunk averages 2 to 4 years in the wild. 80 to 90% of young skunks will die in their first winter. Captive skunks have been known live to be 15 years of age.

That Smell!

Skunks are well aware of the weapon they have at their disposal, and may discharge an extremely obnoxious scent if provoked. A skunk's black and white color serves as a warning, particularly when displaying their tail high in the air. A skunk may stamp its front feet as further warning. Before spraying, a skunk may bend into a U-shape with both head and rump facing the enemy. The two streams of scent can travel upwards of 16 feet, and may permeate the air for a mile or more. Males also use this scent to mark territory and advertise to the opposite sex.

Trapping Wildlife in the City of Los Angeles

The City of Los Angeles Department of Animal Services is not providing traps or issuing trapping permits for the public to use their own, rented, or borrowed traps to remove nuisance wildlife. The trapping or relocation of wildlife by the public is prohibited. The Department of Animal Services suggests trying property alteration, deterrents, & exclusionary methods. The option exists for L.A. City residents to contract with a Nuisance or Pest Control company that has permits to trap and remove some types of mammals. Wildlife trapped by these agencies would be released on site or immediately euthanized. California State law prohibits the relocation of predatory mammals (CCR Title 14 sec. 465.5).

Skunk Concerns

Should people or pets get sprayed at close range, the noxious smell is likely to cause great discomfort and nausea. If sprayed in the eyes, the oily gland secretion will burn and may cause temporary blurred vision. The effect last only a short time as the chemical is purged from the eyes by tears.

It is very important to avoid physical contact with skunks. You should immediately contact your local animal care and control agency if you observe any of the following:

- Any skunk during the full daylight hours. They may be observed out at dawn and dusk but you should not be seeing them mid-day.
- Any skunk appearing to be orphaned, distressed, injured, sick or acting unusual.
- If there is any direct contact from a skunk to yourself or your pet resulting in scratches or bites.

What to do for bites or intimate contact

• Rabies has not been a prevalent issue here in Southern California since the 1960's. Skunks can be a reservoir for Sylvatic Rabies with only 2% ever testing positive for the disease. Should a bite occur involving a human or pet, contact your physician immediately, make a report to the Los Angeles County Department of Veterinary Health Services, and contact your local Animal Services agency to make a report. Pets bitten or having intimate contact with wild mammals will be required to have a booster rabies vaccination within 48 of the incident. Always keep your pet's vaccinations up-to-date to ensure your pet is protected to prevent or reduce the likelihood of receiving or transmitting of disease.

• Many wild animals in years past when observed to be acting strangely people jumped to the conclusion "its rabid", when in fact it may have been an intoxicated animal from eating fermenting fruit. Do not assume rabies after seeing a skunk stumbling around your garden and falling over, Call an expert.

Feeding Wildlife, That's a No-No

In the City of Los Angeles, it is unlawful to feed wildlife. (Feeding of Non-Domesticated Mammalian Predators Prohibited 53.06.5 L.A.M.C.) Feeding can increase the danger of the spread of disease and draws in larger predators. Wild animals fed by humans may quickly lose their natural fear which may lead to a negative wildlife encounter, sadly sometimes cases the wild animal has to be destroyed by wildlife officials as a result of the changed behavior.



Courtesy Camarillo Wildlife Rehabilitation

Evicting Skunks from a Crawl Space

There are several methods. You will need to reverse the dark and quiet of the crawl space to light and noise. This must be done just prior to night fall. You will need non-heat producing fluorescent type lights & a couple of transistor radios (set them to a talk station. Place lights & radios inside the crawl space as far in as you can away from the opening the animal has been using to go under your home, a painter's pole with a wire hanger taped to the end will allow you to push these items further under your home, tie a long string to the items for easy retrieval later, tie the free end of the string outside the opening. (Do not allow electronic items to be near any water leaks). Once the items are placed take a cup of flour, mix in about a tablespoon of cayenne pepper, then sift it out in front of the opening, this will allow you to see if the animals have left if you tracks leading away through the flour, you can close the crawl space. Should the animal be trying really hard to get back in, there could be babies stuck under the home, in which case you will need to open it up and start over to allow the parent animal to remove the young. The time you are most likely to find a wild animal & young in the crawl space is March - September.

NOTE: If you are going to use approved chemical deterrents, wear protective clothing, a disposable mask, and gloves. Never place deterrent chemicals in direct contact with or near a heat source, open flame, soil, food, or near vents leading into your home do not use moth balls or moth cakes).