

When to trap

- Set the trap in the evening before dusk. Skunks are more active at night.



Baiting the trap

- Place the bait through the inspection port located at the top rear of the trap. Garlic sausage, raw wieners, and raw bacon work well for attracting skunks. Pet food and sardines are not recommended as they attract cats.
- If the bait disappears and the trap is not closed, another animal may be present. In this case, suspend the bait by attaching a string around it and securing it through the inspection port.

Catching a Skunk

- Check the inspection port each morning. If the trap is closed, look in the inspection port or through the door. If a skunk has been caught, contact Greenview Agriculture Services for options on how to handle it.
- Skunks appear to be aware of the repulsiveness of their own odour and refrain from scenting on themselves. They avoid spraying in confined spaces such as traps or their dens.

Odour Removal

Skunk spray can stay noticeable for up to a year on clothing and pets, even in small amounts. The following solutions are easily available to help remove the odour:

- Wash in diluted vinegar or tomato juice
- Wash in mixture of:
 - 1L of 3% Hydrogen Peroxide
 - 50ml Baking Soda
 - 1tsp. Liquid Soap

Once the hydrogen peroxide is mixed with the baking soda, the mixture becomes unstable and generates oxygen, therefore should not be bottled or stored. Leftover solution should be diluted with water and disposed of.

For More Information about Avoiding Skunk-Human Conflict

Contact Agriculture Services

Phone: 780-524-7621

Toll Free: 1-888-524-7601

Fax: 780-524-5041



Guide to Managing Skunks



Agriculture Services

Greenview, Alberta, Canada
A great place to live, work and play.

www.mdgreenview.ab.ca

Recognizing a Skunk

Skunks are members of the weasel family (mustelidae). While there are several species of skunk; the only species that exist in Alberta is the striped skunk (*Mephitis mephitis*). The striped skunk is about the size of a cat with a small, triangular shaped head, stout body, short legs, bushy tail, and sharp claws that it can use to dig through soil. The striped skunk is characterized by glossy black fur, and the unmistakable white stripe that starts at its head, and runs down both sides of its body to the end of its tail.

Behaviour

The skunk is normally a docile animal that won't spray without being provoked. They prefer to run away first, and spray only as a last resort. If running away isn't an option, a skunk will first stamp its feet rapidly, hiss, snarl, and raise its tail. If this still doesn't scare the intruder off, it will release a jet of its musk (spray) that can reach up to 15 feet. The spray is acrid and can burn eyes, and the scent can be carried on the wind for up to 1 Km.

Skunks spend most of the winter in a state of torpor, or inactivity, breed in February and March, and the young (kits) are born in early May. The kits are mostly hairless and their eyes begin to open at 17 to 21 days. The mother will begin to bring them out of the den after about 7 weeks, and they will stay with her for the season.



Feeding

Skunks are true omnivores eating everything from rodents and frogs to grass, eggs, and fungi. An interesting fact is that 70% of a skunk's diet is actually beneficial to people, as they consume mice, shrews, grasshoppers, grubs, armyworms, cutworms, and a number of other pest species. Only about 5% of their diet is considered harmful to human property, as skunks do like to raid henhouses and beehives.

Feeding

Rabies, an infectious disease caused by a virus organism, is transmitted through the saliva of an infected animal and is almost always fatal to animals. People can survive the bite of a rabid animal if medical treatment is received promptly. To date, there have been no reports of rabies in Greenview. If a person is bitten by a rabid animal of any kind, wash the bitten area immediately with soap and water, remove any affected clothing and have a physician attend all skunk bites, no matter how minor. Pets can also be vaccinated against the rabies virus by a veterinarian.

Skunks that appear to have no fear of people or pets need to be treated with caution. Skunks that appear to have no fear of people or pets and show some signs of aggression are at a high risk of being infected with rabies. If you suspect a skunk or other wild animal of being rabid, contact Greenview Agricultural Services immediately.



Management

Skunks adapt well to urban and rural areas, living under sidewalks, decks, buildings and brush piles, which greatly increases their chance of human contact, and the chance of people or pets being sprayed.

To avoid having a skunk move into your yard, keep it tidy and remove any brush and debris piles. Avoid feeding skunks by not leaving pet food or garbage out overnight, and remove fallen fruit from under trees.

If a skunk does move in under a building, place crushed mothballs in the cavity as a repellent. You can also shine a light into the den, making it bright and uncomfortable for the skunk to stay in. Once the skunk has moved out, seal the opening with wire mesh, and cover with soil if possible. Unwanted skunks should be trapped outside of the building. Do not shoot a skunk under a building.

Under the Wildlife Act, keeping a skunk as a pet is illegal.

Trapping

Greenview has skunk traps available for rent as a humane method of skunk removal.

Please follow these instructions to trap and remove a skunk.

Setting the Trap

- Set the trap close to the skunk's den or near the skunk's normal line of travel.
- Push in on the springs on the door and lift at the same time. The trap's trigger mechanism is located on the top of the door and hooks onto the bar connected to the pan in the bottom of the trap.
- The trap will have been checked over prior to its rental, so do not make any adjustments to it. If you feel something is not working properly, please contact Greenview Agriculture Services.