

Nature Center, to quarantine and/or euthanize any captured skunks.

WHAT NOT TO DO

- Never move young from the den.
- Do not use poisons. They are inhumane and may be illegal. They can also result in secondary poisoning of raptors, wild scavengers and neighborhood pets.
- As a last resort, trapping can be an effective method of dealing with troublesome wildlife. The most commonly used device is a live-trap which captures the animal physically unharmed. Traps should be checked twice a day (morning and evening) to replenish bait or to humanely deal with captured animals. Raccoons, opossums, and skunks cannot be released off-site, they must be euthanized or released on the same property. Contact the ODNR Division of Wildlife (1-800-Wildlife) for additional trapping regulations.
- It is illegal to keep wild animals, even for a very short time. They have specialized nutritional, housing and handling needs that you are unlikely to be able to provide. Inexperienced individuals who attempt to raise or treat them inevitably produce unhealthy, tame animals that cannot survive in their normal habitats.

SKUNK SPRAY ODOR REMOVAL

Bathing in tomato juice or citrus will not effectively remove skunk odor.

Removal Recipe:

- 1 quart 3% hydrogen peroxide
- 1/4 cup baking soda (sodium bicarbonate)
- 1 teaspoon liquid soap or dish detergent
- Mix these together and bathe (“shampoo” in or rub down) the spray victim thoroughly.
- Be sure to use this mixture immediately after it is created, as it is unstable.
- Rinse with tap water, repeat if necessary
- For spray in the eyes, flush with water as soon as possible.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

If you find a wild animal and are concerned, leave it alone and call Brukner Nature Center at 937-698-6493, seven days a week, 24 hours a day.



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Brukner Nature Center is a non-profit, privately funded organization promoting the appreciation and understanding of wildlife conservation through preservation, education, and rehabilitation.

The purpose of our wildlife rehabilitation program is to educate people regarding the natural history of Ohio's wildlife, to offer help and advice when wildlife and people conflict, and to care for, rehabilitate, and release native Ohio wildlife expected to survive in their natural environment.

Living with *SKUNKS*

in Miami County



Brukner Nature Center

The striped skunk (*Mephitis mephitis*) is one of our more interesting mammals, with a unique black and white striped coat, bouncing walk and air of confidence. The confidence is the result of a remarkable defense system: glands beneath the skunk's tail produce an oily, sulfurous substance that it can spray with dismaying accuracy, up to 15 feet, temporarily disabling the senses of a potential attacker and allowing the skunk to escape. Skunks are nocturnal, burrowing mammals; most closely related to members of the weasel family. A skunk's diet includes: insects, other small mammals, fruits and carrion. Many of the insects skunks eat are bothersome to humans.

PREVENTING PROBLEMS

Do not encourage skunks by feeding them. Keep pet food and water dishes inside, especially at night. Do not allow spillage to accumulate under bird feeders. Keep grills and barbecues clean - even small food scraps may attract skunks. If possible, do not keep garbage cans outside. Use welded wire to prevent animals from accessing openings under decks, elevated sheds, concrete slabs and porches. Secure outside access to crawl spaces.

Living in Our Yard

Skunks are at home in a variety of habitats but prefer forest borders where water is nearby. Cities and suburbs provide adequate food and shelter. Common den and resting sites include abandoned woodchuck burrows, hollow logs, wood or brush piles, openings under buildings, elevated sheds, concrete slabs and porches and crawl spaces under houses.

Grubs

Skunks and raccoons may tear up lawns in search of grubs. Cayenne pepper and rags soaked in ammonia can be placed in the affected area. Another option is to mix eight ounces of Dawn dish soap, a handful of chewing tobacco and water in a lawn sprayer and spray on the affected grassy area.

Gardens

Exclusion is the best technique. Surround your garden with a 3-foot-high chicken-wire fence, bury-



ing 1 foot of the wire mesh into the ground. Taste deterrents may also work; however, they need to be reapplied after a heavy dew or rain. Recommended deterrents include spraying a mixture of one gallon of water and two tablespoons of hot sauce onto the plants, spraying garlic puree onto the plants, or sprinkling baby powder on the plants. You may wish to visit a nursery or home center for commercial products.

Raiding Your Garbage Cans

The simplest solution to keep skunks out of your garbage cans is to bring the can inside where the skunks cannot reach them. If this is not possible, pour one cup of ammonia inside the garbage can or sprinkle black pepper on the top of the lid and secure with bungee cords.

Skunk Stuck in a Window Well?

Method One - Place a rough board at a 45 degree angle into the window well. Make sure the board is long enough to act as a ramp to the top. If you do not have a rough board, wrap a towel or carpeting around the board to provide traction for the skunk. (They are not good climbers). Place fish-scented cat food, tuna or cheese at the top of the ramp to entice the skunk. Skunks are nocturnal (active at night) and may not leave the well until night.

Method Two - Attach a string or rope to a five-gallon bucket handle. Place food inside the bucket to entice the skunk, and lower the bucket on its side so that the skunk is able to walk inside. Once the skunk is inside, slowly raise the bucket to ground level and place the bucket on its side with the open-

ing away from you so that the skunk can walk out. Try to stay out of the skunk's sight.

RECOMMENDED DETERRENTS

Place lighting, such as bright flashlights, flood lamps or blinking strands of holiday lights in the den. It is best to leave the lights on 24 hours a day. If this is not possible, the lights must at least be on during the daytime to disturb the animal's sleep.

Play a radio, portable alarm clock, noisy children's toy or anything that makes noise repeatedly either in or near the den. It is best to have the sound on for 24 hours a day. If this is not possible, the sound must be on during the daytime to disturb the animal's sleep.

Place rags soaked in ammonia in the den for one week. Ammonia has an irritating smell. Over time, the ammonia will dissipate so it is important to re-soak the rags daily. Very important: do not use ammonia-soaked rags from March through August, as they may injure the infant wildlife that is too young to escape.

It is important to use all the techniques at the same time in order for the deterrents to be successful. To determine if the animal has left a den site, wad up newspaper and pack it into the den entrance. (This also helps to hold in ammonia fumes). If the skunk is still using the den, the newspaper will be pulled out. If after a few days the paper has not been disturbed, securely repair any access openings. Failure to do so may result in the skunk or another animal moving in.

PUBLIC HEALTH CONCERNS

While rabies is rare in Ohio, skunks and bats are the two wild animals most likely to be infected with the virus. Skunks can carry the rabies virus for a long time before exhibiting symptoms and infected female skunks can pass the virus along to their young. Because of the exposure risk, never handle a skunk, adult or juvenile.

If you find a skunk with visible wounds, contact a licensed nuisance trapper. Do not capture the animal yourself. The seriousness of rabies has led the Ohio Department of Natural Resources to require all wildlife rehabilitators, such as Brukner