



## Lake Erie Nature & Science Center

Live Wildlife Exhibits & Rehabilitation • Educational Programs • Planetarium



### Don't Get Skunked!

Skunks are found throughout most of North America and are best known for their strong, “don’t-mess-with-me” spray. Skunks are nocturnal, needing a quiet and dark place during the daytime. Their dens are usually in burrows and they’ll often utilize spaces under houses, decks, woodpiles, etc.

During courtship they may be more likely to spray. Their mating season is usually February through March and young are born April through June. Skunks are attracted to any type of food such as pet food, birdseed, ripe fruit, water, insects and garbage. They can uproot gardens and lawns when searching for insects such as grubs.

Skunks do have an important role and place in the ecosystem. Learn how you can coexist with them peacefully.

#### TO AVOID BEING SPRAYED

- Skunks will usually spray as its last line of defense. They will first warn the threat by stomping their feet.
- Keep pets indoors at nights when skunks are more likely to be out.
- Keep dogs on leash when walking, especially in wild areas.

#### IF YOU OR YOUR PET IS SPRAYED

- Wash with Simple Green, rinsing well. Follow with vinegar rinse.
- You can also try washing with a mixture of: 1 qt. 3% hydrogen peroxide (from the drugstore), 1/4 cup baking soda, 1 tsp. liquid soap. Keep mixture out of eyes, nose and mouth. Follow with a tap water rinse. Do not store mixture in closed bottle-it could explode. Quantity is suitable for cat or small dog.
- Wash clothes with Simple Green and use dilute bleach solution to rinse if the item is safe to bleach.
- Use a commercial skunk deodorizer, available from veterinarians or feed stores.

#### IF YOUR HOUSE HAS BEEN SPRAYED

- Wash sprayed surfaces with a bleach solution or a commercial skunk deodorizer.
- Boil water and rosemary on your stove to eliminate the odor from inside the house.

#### TO DETER SKUNKS FROM ENTERING YOUR YARD

- A 3-foot-high wire mesh fence extended 12 inches beneath the ground surface and bend at a 90 degree angle for 12 inches will keep most striped skunks out.
- Treat your lawn for grubs and other insects. Treatments are available at lawn and garden stores.
- Commercial repellents may work on a temporary basis. Use around the perimeter of the yard.
- Try this homemade repellent: One cup castor oil plus one cup liquid dish detergent, mixed with a gallon of water in a spray can. Spray well around the area.
- Scare tactics such as pie pans tied to stakes at various places in yard may help.
- Most repellents work to varying degrees depending on how motivated the skunks are to enter the yard.

*(more)*

***Our Mission: The non-profit Lake Erie Nature & Science Center educates and inspires each of us to understand, appreciate and take responsibility for our natural universe.***

Wildlife

## **SKUNK UNDER THE HOUSE?**

- Find the entrance. Skunks are excellent at digging and you can often locate a hole under the foundation. Either wait for the skunk to come out or use disturbance tactics such as lights, music, or bad smells to encourage it to come out.
- If there are babies present, leave the hole open and make the area unpleasant by lights and noise. Skunks are very sensitive to light. The mother will move her babies to another nest site, and you can then safely close the hole.
- Sprinkle flour or cornstarch on the ground around the opening so you can more easily check for footprints to see if the skunk has come out. Or pack hole lightly with leaves, soil or paper to see if a skunk is entering or exiting through the night.
- Finally, when you are confident the skunk has moved on and there are no more babies present, securely close the hole by burying hardware mesh 12 inches underground at a 90 degree angle for 12 inches away from the structure. This solution should provide a permanent solution and prevent other animals from taking up residence in the same spot.



**For other advice please contact  
Lake Erie Nature & Science Center  
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440-871-2900 ext. 204**