

LIVING WITH WILDLIFE

Skunks are common throughout Pennsylvania. As many as 2 to 50 skunks can populate a square mile area. They like to den in warm and dry burrows and prefer slopes for their den sites due to good drainage. They typically feed on insects, small rodents and reptiles. They favor grubs and bees. However, if there is a food source available they will be drawn to this.

- When feeding birds use bird feeders high off the ground so as not to attract the skunks or other wildlife.
- Do not feed your pet outside if you can avoid doing so. Do not leave any food sit out overnight.
- Pet cats should be kept inside and not allowed to roam freely. If your pet cat is trapped on someone else's property they will be instructed to take the cat to the Humane Society.
- Put bags of garbage in cans and then seal with a tight lid to prevent the odors from attracting wildlife.

Most skunks are not afraid of people or domestic animals so it is very likely to see them during the hours of dusk to dawn. Practice damage control to keep them from moving in on your property.

- Keep skunks from denning under buildings by sealing off all foundation openings including sheds, decks, patios, porches and swimming pool foundations.
- Cover all openings with wire mesh, sheet metal, concrete or stone.
- Bury fencing 1 1/2 to 2 feet in areas where skunks could gain access by digging.
- Skunks can be excluded from window wells or similar pits with mesh fencing or fiberglass domes.
- Remove debris such as lumber, brush piles, fence posts and junk vehicles that can provide shelter for skunks.
- Wood piles should be at least 6" off the ground.

Skunks are usually docile and will only defend itself when feeling threatened. Signs of aggression could be consistent with rabies. If your pet encounters a skunk and there is physical altercation call the Police Department. If there is a possibility the skunk is rabid it will need to be tested by the PA Department of Agriculture. The only way to test positively for rabies is to examine the dead animal's brain for the infection. If there is human exposure the PA Game Commission needs to be notified and file a report. Other signs of rabies, other than aggressive behavior would be lethargic, walking in a circle, acting confused and drunk-like. Just seeing a skunk in daylight is not an indicator of rabies.

Nuisance Wildlife, Summerdale, 717-732-8099

Ehrlich Pest Control, Harrisburg, 717-238-9590

S & S Wildlife Control Services, Hbg. 717-540-9042