

For More Information Contact

wildlifecontrol@sPCA.bc.ca
BC SPCA Provincial Call Centre
1.855.622.7722

BCSPCA
SPEAKING FOR ANIMALS

SKUNKS

WILDLIFE CONTROL BEST PRACTICES

Species

Striped skunk, *Mehpitis mephitis*
Spotted skunk, *Spilogale gracilis*

Legal Designation

Schedule B, Furbearer, *BC Wildlife Act*

Disease Risks

Skunks are not rabies vectors in BC

Seasonal Considerations

One litter of 4-6 babies in spring



Did you know?

Skunks mostly eat insects, and sometimes fruits and nuts, but they are also valuable pest control because they eat small rodents.

Striped skunk

Common Conflicts

Skunks are slow-moving, nocturnal animals with poor eyesight and limited climbing skills. They are notorious for their defensive spray, which they only use as a last resort or when startled. Skunks are attracted to garbage, compost and fallen tree fruit, insects in lawns, and can dig underneath decks and sheds to den.

Signs of skunks include cone-shaped pits or clawed-up areas of earth.

Conflict Prevention

Remove potential food sources by securing garbage bins and composts, and collecting fruit that has fallen on the ground. Make sure bird feeders are not overflowing and pet food is not left outside.

Maintain sheds and garages to prevent skunks from getting in. Block access underneath porches, decks and crawlspaces. Remove wood and brush piles.

Skunks Trapped in Window Wells

Skunks are poor climbers, and may get trapped in ground-level window wells and other depressions, and usually need help to escape. You can gently scoop them out with a snow shovel, or place a plank so they can climb out on their own. Wrap a towel around the plank to increase traction, and place it at a less than 45° angle. For a deeper well or depression, use a rope to lower a box with smelly food (e.g. cat food) inside. Once the skunk is inside, pull the box up and allow them to walk free.

If a skunk gets tightly stuck (e.g. in dumpster drains, or heads stuck in lids or jars) they may need to be sedated by a veterinarian or a wildlife rehabilitator so that they can be removed without further injury.

Call an **AnimalKind** accredited pest control company if you need help managing skunks

Visit www.animalkind.ca for more information



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Striped skunk



RECOMMENDED

Actions & methods for control

If skunks have moved in, try using mild humane harassment. Soak rags in apple cider vinegar, place them in a plastic container with holes poked in the lid, and place the containers in or near den or entry points (without blocking access). If babies are present, it is best to wait until they are old enough to leave the den. Injured or orphaned skunks should be taken to a wildlife rehabilitator for treatment.

To evict the animal, install a one-way door for two to three nights so the skunk(s) can leave, but not re-enter. If a one-way door can't be used, or has been ineffective, animals should be live-trapped and then released immediately outside the home. Use reuniting techniques if there are babies present, and seal gaps and holes once the whole family has moved out.

Don't Trap and Relocate

Trapping and relocating wildlife away from their home is generally not a permanent or humane solution. Animals often injure themselves and may die trying to escape a trap. Relocated animals have to set up a new home, may starve trying to find food or get into fights with other animals over territory, and may spend vital energy trying to return home.

When you trap animals, you also risk separating a mother from her babies. Even if you move an entire family, a mother may abandon her young due to the pressure to find food in a new area and care for the babies.



NOT RECOMMENDED

Actions & methods for control

The BC SPCA does not recommend killing skunks. However, legal regulated methods may be used for euthanasia to relieve suffering when animals are injured. They may also be used legally to control skunks, but are not recommended as they can cause suffering, may be high risk to non-target animals, and/or are difficult to administer. Check local bylaws and/or regulations to confirm whether the method is legal in a municipality.

- Trapping and relocating (in accordance with the BC Wildlife Act – can only relocate within 10 km in BC)
- Blunt force trauma
- Carbon dioxide or carbon monoxide
- Cervical dislocation
- Killing neck snare
- Captive bolt
- Shot to brain
- Spring trap (e.g. Conibear-style)



ILLEGAL

Actions & methods for control

- Bait poisons
- Drowning
- Suffocation
- Chloroform
- Electrocution
- Freezing (including dry ice)
- Leghold or foot snare
- Vehicle exhaust

If Pets or People Have Been Sprayed:

Combine:

- 1 L of 3% hydrogen peroxide
- 60 mL (1/4 c) baking soda
- 5 mL (1 tsp) liquid laundry or dish soap

Use:

Rinse with water and repeat if necessary to eliminate the smell