



Living with Skunks

01. Skunk Dens

Skunks are attracted to: warm, dry, dark & easily defended areas.

Time Frame:

- Duration:
 - If settings are favorable, skunks may remain longer.
- Late Summer --> Early Spring:
 - Normally occupy a den site for 2-3 consecutive nights.
 - *To Do:* Wait until they move on before sealing off access to the den site.
- Early Spring --> Summer:
 - Females with young may stay at a den site longer.
 - *To Do:* Wait until the young are old enough to leave with their mother before sealing off access to the den site.

Skunks reside in:

- Storm sewers
- Junk piles
- Old buildings
- Sheds
- Drain pipes
- Standing or fallen hollow trees
- Rock crevices

Den sites can be located under:

- Wood & rock piles
- Buildings (i.e., crawl spaces)
- Porches/decks
- Concrete slabs
- Sheds

Purpose:

- Underground dens are used year-round for:
 - Daytime resting, hiding, birthing, and raising young.
- They need shelter when they are at their most vulnerable:
 - During the coldest parts of the winter & when raising young.



02. Presence of Skunks

Possible Signs of Skunks on Your Property:

- Small, shallow holes in the lawn.
 - Result of a skunk foraging for grubs.
- Plants knocked over.
- Damage to lower leaves or garden crops.



03. Problems with Skunks

- Burrow under buildings & other structures
- Raid garbage
- Dig holes in lawns
- Defensive spray



Dens:

- Skunks can dig their own dens, but often use burrows that have been abandoned by other animals.
- Skunks will plug the entrance of their den with leaves & grass.
 - To insulate them from the cold.

04. Removal

- A permit issued by the IDNR district Wildlife Biologist is required for trapping/removal in urban areas.

05. Preventative Measures

The most effective way to prevent conflict is to modify the habitat around your home, so as not to attract skunks!

To Do:

1. Cover window wells.
2. Keep BBQ grills clean.
3. Do not feed skunks:
 - a. If fed, they often lose their fear of humans.
4. Secure/close garbage cans.
5. Pets:
 - a. Feed pets indoors.
 - b. Bring water bowls inside at the end of the day.
 - c. Lock pet doors at night.
6. Clean up spilled bird seed below bird feeders.

06. Exclusion Techniques

Disturbances:

- Make the den an unattractive space:
 - Add motion-activated lights & noise.

Secure All Outbuildings:

- Close garage & shed doors.
- Secure outside access to crawl spaces.
- Use welded wire to exclude animals from:
 - Under decks, elevated sheds, openings under porches & concrete slabs.

Lawn Care:

- Skunks will dig 1-3 inch deep holes where grubs & worms are located.
 - Occurs due to wet soil conditions.
- Lay down 1-inch mesh/chicken wire over the affected area. Secure with stakes.

Seal Off Openings:

- Any suspected skunk den should first be checked to determine if skunks are actively living there.
 - Loosely fill the hole with materials such as: leaves, straw, or crumpled paper. If a skunk is present, it will push their way out & reopen the hole.
- If the plug remains undisturbed for 3 nights, it's safe to assume it's unoccupied.
 - Seal with: wire mesh, sheet metal, or concrete.

