



SKUNKS

TIPS FOR REDUCING HUMAN-SKUNK CONFLICTS:

- Do not feed wildlife. This increases the chance that the animal will lose its natural fear of humans.
- Seal the foundation. Skunks often take up residence under houses. To prevent this, seal all foundation openings and bury fencing up to 2 feet deep in areas where they can gain access by digging.
- Do not approach skunks. Skunks transmit rabies. They are sometimes seen out during the day foraging for food. As long as the skunk is alert and walking normally, there is no cause for concern.
- A leashed dog is a safer dog. When out for a walk, keep your pet leashed to greatly reduce the chance of a negative wildlife encounter.
- Lock up your livestock. Make sure chickens are securely enclosed at night. Fencing around the coop should extend eight inches underground.
- Keep grubs out of your yard. Skunks love eating grubs! Many commercial grub treatments are available on the market to prevent damage to your yard.

BENEFITS OF SKUNKS

Skunks are considered a beneficial species to farmers, gardeners, and landowners because they feed on a large number of agricultural and garden pests, including mice, voles, beetles, various larvae, wasps and crickets.

Skunks are also scavengers. They will seek out animal carcasses, which helps keep an ecosystem free of carrion. Scavengers are important to the health of the environment.

NATURAL HISTORY

- Skunks are members of the Mustelidae family. Five species of skunks are found in Texas, but you probably won't ever meet one kind – the hooded skunk – unless you live in the Big Bend region. Skunks usually nest in ground burrows or crawl spaces, although spotted skunks climb and may go in attics or trees.
- Skunks are omnivores, feasting on insects, small vertebrates, and eggs, as well as vegetable matter. They prefer insects in summer and mice in winter.
- Skunks remain solitary except during breeding season. After mating, the male is driven off, and the female raises the litter, typically 4 to 6 offspring (kits), alone. Kits are born from about the end of April through early June. Breeding usually occurs in February or March.
- Skunks are nocturnal and they are slow and deliberate—confident they can defend themselves.