



BOBCATS

TIPS FOR REDUCING HUMAN-BOBCAT CONFLICTS:

- **Do not feed wildlife.** This increases the chance that the animal will lose its natural fear of humans.
- **Feed dogs and cats indoors and clean up after them.** Water, pet food, and droppings can attract wildlife, including bobcats.
- **Do not leave unattended dogs and cats outdoors, especially from dusk to dawn.** Left outside at night, small pets may become prey to bobcats.
- **Do not move "abandoned" baby bobcats.** Mothers leave their babies alone while they hunt for food. Baby bobcats found alone are typically not orphans.
- **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.
- **Enclose pet birds and poultry in a secure pen or house.** Properly secure domestic birds to reduce their risk of becoming prey to bobcats.

BENEFITS OF BOBCATS

Bobcats play an important ecological role. They are effective predators of small mammals, such as rodents and rabbits, helping to keep population numbers of these and other herbivores in check.

Bobcats occasionally take larger mammals, such as deer, usually culling the weak ones. This limits over-browsing by deer and prevents unmanageable population increases.

NATURAL HISTORY

- Bobcats are members of the feline family. Their range covers the entire continental United States. They inhabit places with dense vegetation and plenty of prey. However, as their native habitats shrink, they are increasingly common in urban areas. Bobcats live in dens, which can be in a tree trunk, cave, brush pile, or fallen tree.
- Bobcats are carnivores, meaning they eat only meat. Their preferred food is rabbit, but they will also eat rodents, insects, birds, and even deer! The bobcat sneaks up on its prey before ambushing it with a lethal bite.
- A female bobcat's territory is approximately 5 square miles. Females are very territorial and their ranges never overlap. Alternatively, a male bobcat's territory is approximately 30 square miles and may overlap with other male cats.
- Bobcats are crepuscular- meaning they are most active during dawn and dusk.



COYOTES

TIPS FOR REDUCING HUMAN-COYOTE CONFLICTS:

- **Do not feed wildlife.** This increases the chance that the animal will lose its natural fear of humans.
- **Feed dogs and cats indoors and clean up after them.** Water, pet food, and droppings can attract wildlife, including coyotes.
- **Do not leave unattended dogs and cats outdoors, especially from dusk to dawn.** Left outside at night, small pets may become prey to coyotes.
- **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.
- **Enclose pet birds and poultry in a secure pen or house.** Properly secure domestic birds to reduce their risk of becoming prey to coyotes.
- **Tightly cover garbage and compost bins.** Open bins encourage scavenging.
- **Remove fallen fruit from yards.**

BENEFITS OF COYOTES

Coyotes play an important role in maintaining healthy ecosystems and species diversity. They are a keystone species, meaning that their presence or absence has a significant impact on the biological community.

As the top carnivore in some ecosystems, coyotes provide a number of benefits including regulating the populations of smaller predator species, such as skunks, raccoons, and foxes, which helps boost biodiversity.

NATURAL HISTORY

- Coyotes are members of the canine family. They inhabit every state in the continental United States. They prefer deserts, grasslands, and forests, but are incredibly adaptable to most habitats. For this reason, they often thrive in urban areas.
- Coyotes are omnivores, meaning they eat both plants and animals. Though they have a wide-ranging diet, they do prefer meat and hunt for small mammals, birds, mice, and snakes. In times when meat is scarce, they also eat fruits and berries.
- Coyotes are semi-social animals; they can be solitary or form traveling pairs or packs. This varies based on geographic area. Urban coyotes tend to be transient and travel alone.
- Location affects when coyotes are most active. They can be diurnal (active during the day) or crepuscular (active at dawn and dusk). However, they tend to become more nocturnal (active at night) when they live in close proximity to humans.



BATS

TIPS FOR REDUCING HUMAN-BAT CONFLICTS:

- **Do not handle bats with your bare hands.** Bat bites can cause injury and carry disease.
- **Seal potential roosting locations within your home.** Placing caps on chimneys and blocking outside entryways to crawlspaces, attics, and under porches will deter bats.
- **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.
- **Ensure your pets are up-to-date on rabies vaccination.** Prevention is the best medicine in the event your pet is bitten by a bat. Remember, the majority of bats DO NOT carry rabies. A study by the CDC found the positivity rate among bats to be approx. 6%.
- **Understanding reduces fear.** Bats are often feared and misunderstood by humans, but they are incredibly beneficial creatures. They help pollinate plants and eat unwanted insects, like mosquitoes.

BENEFITS OF BATS

Bats play an important role in their environments. Some plants depend partly or wholly on bats to pollinate their flowers or spread their seeds, while other bats also help control pests by eating insects- like mosquitoes!

You can help increase bat populations, and biodiversity, by installing bat boxes on your property.

NATURAL HISTORY

- Bats may fly through the air like birds, but they are true mammals. They belong to the order Chiroptera, a Greek word meaning "hand-wing," which accurately describes their most notable and unusual anatomical feature.
- Bats are insectivores and eat insects like beetles, moths, and mosquitos. They are incredibly efficient at insect control! For example, one little brown bat can consume up to 500 mosquito-sized insects in just an hour!
- Bats are typically social creatures, and prefer to live and roost in large groups. In many species, males and females roost separately except when mating.
- Bats are nocturnal- meaning they are active at night. During the day, bats rest, groom, and sleep. At night, they emerge to forage for food and drink water. After feeding for an hour or two they may rest again, then have a second feeding before dawn.



RACCOONS

BENEFITS OF RACCOONS

Despite the mischief this masked mammal can sometimes cause, raccoons play an important role in the ecosystem by serving as gardeners, pest control, and the "clean-up crew",

Raccoons are beneficial to ecosystems for the distribution of plant seeds. Feeding on berries and nuts, not only on meat, raccoons then help distribute the seeds around the areas they inhabit.

Raccoons also eat carrion, or the remains of dead animals, and feast on small rodents and insects. This keeps areas clean, which in turn helps to keep pest populations in check

TIPS FOR REDUCING HUMAN-RACCOON CONFLICTS:

- **Do not feed wildlife.** This increases the chance that the animal will lose its natural fear of humans.
- **Feed dogs and cats indoors and clean up after them.** Water, pet food, and droppings can attract small mammals, including raccoons.
- **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.
- **Tightly cover garbage and compost bins.** Open bins encourage scavenging.
- **Seal potential denning locations within your home.** Placing caps on chimneys and blocking outside entryways to crawlspaces, attics, and under porches will deter raccoons.

NATURAL HISTORY

- Raccoons are members of the Procyonidae family, often categorized as "little bears". Raccoons are common throughout the United States. These extremely adaptable creatures can thrive in almost any environmental setting, and live in both the city and country.
- Raccoons are omnivores and will eat almost anything. Their diet is typically made up of 40% invertebrates (such as insects, mussels, and crustaceans), 30% plant material, and 30% vertebrates (such as small mammals, birds, and reptiles).
- Raccoons are semi-social, often sharing a territory with a small number of other raccoons. They spend the majority of their time alone, but will meet at resting and feeding areas without conflict.
- Raccoons are primarily nocturnal, meaning they're most active at night, though it is not uncommon to see them awake during the daytime.



SQUIRRELS

TIPS FOR REDUCING HUMAN-SQUIRREL CONFLICTS:

- **Do not feed wildlife.** This increases the chance that the squirrel will lose its natural fear of humans and become aggressive.
- **Do not attempt to pet squirrels.** They seem friendly, but are wild! Squirrel bites can cause injury and carry disease.
- **Do not move "abandoned" baby squirrels.** If you find a fallen squirrel nest on the ground, the best action is to leave the nest at the base of the closest tree. The mother will search for the nest nearby.
- **Keep them out of the bird feeder.** Place the feeder at least 10 feet in any direction from where a squirrel can jump to the feeder.
- **Seal potential denning locations within your home.** Placing caps on chimneys and blocking outside entryways to crawlspaces, attics, and under porches will deter squirrels.

BENEFITS OF SQUIRRELS

Squirrels play an important ecological role as seed and spore dispersers. Squirrels catch, or store, seeds and nuts in the soil and trees. When forgotten, these seeds and nuts sprout into new plants and trees.

Squirrels also spread mushrooms through their scat. After eating a mushroom, the spores travel through their guts unchanged, and are then dispersed throughout the forest.

NATURAL HISTORY

- Squirrels are members of the Sciuridae family, consisting of small and medium-sized rodents. Tree squirrels are commonly seen everywhere from woodlands to city parks.
- Tree squirrels are omnivores, meaning they eat both plants and animals. Though they are excellent climbers and spend a lot of time in trees, squirrels come to the ground in search of food such as nuts, acorns, berries, and flowers. They also eat bark, eggs, and baby birds.
- Tree squirrels live in family groups. Family groups are territorial, and areas are primarily defended by the male who holds the highest rank in the group hierarchy.
- Tree squirrels are primarily diurnal (active during the day) and crepuscular (active at dawn and dusk).



OPOSSUMS

TIPS FOR REDUCING HUMAN-OPOSSUM CONFLICTS:

- **Stash your trash.** Secure trash and compost in closed bins to prevent midnight raids.
- **Do not trap opossums.** Opossums are normally transient animals, staying only 2-3 days in an area before moving on. If opossums are eliminated, the population of pests will increase.
- **Don't let them mooch from the pooch.** Opossums love eating pet food and are attracted to easy water sources. To prevent them from staying near your home, lock up pet food and water in the evening.
- **Seal potential denning locations.** Make the area you live less desirable by keeping doors and garage doors closed, and close windows that are located next to tree limbs and fences. Check your subfloor and exterior vents for access into your walls and attics. Secure any holes with wire mesh or spray foam.

BENEFITS OF OPOSSUMS

Opossums keep neighborhoods clear of unwanted pests like cockroaches, ticks rats, and mice.

Opossums have resistance to snake venom and eat venomous species. They are beneficial to gardens by eating snails, slugs and fallen, overripe fruit.

NATURAL HISTORY

- Opossums are from the Didelphidae family and are among the oldest, most primitive mammals of the New World. They are the only marsupial found north of Mexico. The Virginia opossum is the only species found in the United States and Canada.
- The opossum is active only at night, and is a solitary animal.
- They have an eclectic diet and will eat both plants and animals, including rodents, young rabbits, birds, insects, crustaceans, frogs, fruits and berries, and vegetables.
- Females usually have two litters a year. The babies are born after just 11-12 days, and are about the size of a honeybee. They are blind, furless, and do not look anything like adult opossums.
- Many opossums die during the first year of their life, and adults usually live only about two years in the wild.



ARMADILLOS

TIPS FOR REDUCING HUMAN-ARMADILLO CONFLICTS:

- **Do not touch an armadillo with your bare hands.** Armadillos can be infected with the causative agent of leprosy. Avoid touching them and avoid contact with their fluids.
- **Do not trap armadillos.** They are difficult to trap and if removed will only create a vacuum effect for others to come in.
- **Eliminate their food source.** Reduce their food sources in your yard to make it less inviting. Trim bushes, shrubs, and tall grass. Armadillos look for these overgrown areas because they're often full of insects. Beneficial nematodes and reducing watering are great ways to kill the grubs that attract armadillos.
- **Prevent digging in your yard.** You will need in-ground fencing that extends at least 18 inches in the ground to prevent armadillos from digging.

BENEFITS OF ARMADILLOS

Armadillos can control pests, disperse seeds, and be effective sentinels of potential disease outbreaks or bioindicators of environmental contaminants.

When the females give birth, they can produce up to four genetically identical babies at once. Therefore, scientists researching reproduction and multiple births find these armadillos to be very important to their research.

NATURAL HISTORY

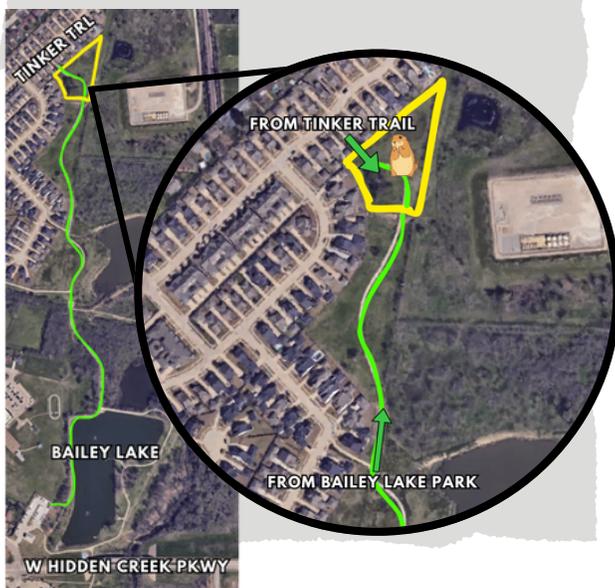
- Nine-banded armadillos are from the Dasypodidae family. Scientists classify armadillos as Order Xenartha, the same order as anteaters and sloths. They have poorly developed teeth and limited mobility.
- Just like a turtle, the shell is called a carapace and is made up of scutes or bony plates attached to a tough epidermal skin layer.
- Armadillos are largely insectivores but may consume fruit when available. The armadillo's diet consists mainly of invertebrates including insects, millipedes, centipedes, snails, leeches, and earthworms.
- Generally, the female produces only one litter per year. A single fertilized egg gives rise to four separate embryos. They breed between June and August.



PRAIRIE DOGS

TIPS FOR REDUCING HUMAN-PRAIRIE DOG CONFLICTS:

- **Do not give them human food.**
Not only is it bad for their health, but interacting with them increases the chance that they will lose their natural fear of humans.
- **A leashed dog is a safer dog.**
Burleson's prairie dog population resides in a city-owned park where it is required to keep your dog on a leash.
- **Keep them out of your yard.**
Prairie dogs actively clear vegetation so they can see predators from a distance. To force a colony to relocate, establish a visual barrier using fast-growing tall grasses, other vegetation or fencing.



BENEFITS OF PRAIRIE DOGS

Prairie dogs play an important role in the ecosystem. Through their foraging, prairie dogs affect the redistribution of minerals and nutrients, encourage penetration and retention of moisture, and affect plant species composition. By eating grass, they help maintain grassland habitats by preventing woody shrubs from taking over.

They serve as a food source for many predators and leave vacant burrows for other animals.

NATURAL HISTORY

- Black-tailed prairie dogs are from the Sciuridae family and are found in isolated populations from Central Texas to just north of the Canadian border.
- Prairie dogs are strictly diurnal animals. They are most active during the cool hours of the day, when they engage in social activities such as visiting and grooming each other as well as feeding on grasses and herbs.
- Black-tailed prairie dogs live in large social colonies and do not migrate. Males will disperse from their home family groups upon maturation but typically stay within the same larger group or immigrate to another nearby colony. Very infrequently, males will attempt to establish a completely new colony.
- Prairie dogs only give birth to one litter per year. The breeding season is mid-March to mid-April, with the young being born four to five weeks later. The size of the litter varies from two to eight young. During May and early June, the young begin to emerge from their burrows.



RABBITS

TIPS FOR REDUCING HUMAN-RABBIT CONFLICTS:

- **Do not feed wildlife.** This increases the chance that the animal will lose its natural fear of humans.
- **Do not move "abandoned" baby rabbits.** Mothers feed babies only twice a day- at dawn and dusk. Baby rabbits found alone are typically not orphans.
- **Look before you mow.** Prevent injury to baby rabbits by checking your yard carefully before you mow.
- **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.
- **Do not attempt to pet wild rabbits.** They seem friendly, but are wild! Rabbit bites can cause injury and carry disease.
- **Keep them out of your garden.** A well constructed fence is the most effective way to protect your plants.

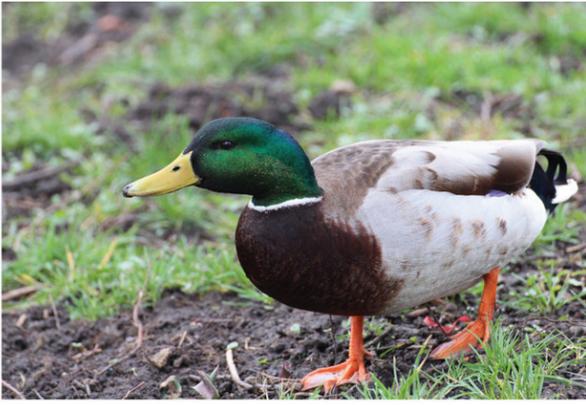
BENEFITS OF RABBITS

Rabbits play an important role in a well-balanced ecosystem. In their natural habitats, rabbits provide ecological benefits as an important member of the food web.

By consuming plants, rabbits keep plant life in check. They are also an important food source for many carnivorous predators, particularly bobcats.

NATURAL HISTORY

- Rabbits are members of the Leporidae family. They are common throughout the continental United States. They can be found in several habitats, including urban areas, where they are often spotted in backyards and city parks.
- Rabbits are herbivores, meaning their diet consists primarily of plants. They eat a wide variety of vegetation, such as bark, twigs, leaves, fruit, buds, flowers, and seeds. Rarely, rabbits are known to eat arthropods, such as caterpillars, millipedes, and grubs.
- Common rabbits in North Texas, like the the eastern cottontail, are solitary except when mating or raising young. Adults may form social hierarchies, with a dominant male doing the majority of the breeding.
- Rabbits are primarily crepuscular (active at dawn and dusk) and nocturnal (active at night).



DUCKS

TIPS FOR REDUCING HUMAN-DUCK CONFLICTS:

- **Do not feed wildlife.** This increases the chance that the animal will lose its natural fear of humans and become aggressive.
- **No crackers for quackers.** Feeding bread, chips, and other human food to waterfowl can make them ill and cause deformities, as it does not contain the right nutrition or calories needed to stay warm or properly develop.
- **Increased population, increased spread of disease.** Feeding leads to public health concerns. Too many animals in one place increases the chance of disease transmission to people and among other wildlife.
- **Do not approach or attempt to pet ducks.** They seem friendly, but are wild! Duck bites can cause injury and carry disease.
- **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.

BENEFITS OF DUCKS

Waterfowl, like ducks, are an integral part of the wetland ecosystem. Their migratory movements enhance biodiversity by introducing plant, invertebrate, amphibian, and fish species from other sites.

For example, frog eggs might get transported from pond-to-pond if they are stuck on a duck's foot, or ingested insect larvae might get deposited in a wetland far from where it was eaten.

NATURAL HISTORY

- Ducks are members of the Anatidae family. They inhabit every state in the United States. Ducks rely on water and are found in marshes, oceans, rivers, ponds, and lakes. They are a common sight in urban settings.
- Ducks are omnivores, meaning they eat both plants and animals. A duck's diet depends on a range of factors including species and habitat. For example, dabbling ducks tend to feed on plants and insects, while diving ducks prefer fish and crustaceans.
- Ducks are highly social. Males, called drakes, and females sometimes live in pairs or together with their ducklings. At other times, ducks spend much of their time in larger groups.
- Ducks are considered a diurnal bird species, meaning they are most active during the day. However, studies have shown that many duck species are semi-nocturnal and may be very active at night- especially during full moons or bright, clear nights.



SNAKES

TIPS FOR REDUCING HUMAN-SNAKE CONFLICTS:

- **Respect snakes, and their space.** The majority of snake bites happen when a human attempts to handle or harass the snake. If you have a serious snake concern, call a professional.
- **Understand when snakes are most active.** Activity increases in warm weather and at night. For example, they are often drawn to warm asphalt on a spring evening.
- **Wear protective clothing when working outdoors.** Always wear boots and long pants when doing yard work. Leather gloves are recommended when handling brush and debris.
- **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.
- **Understanding reduces fear.** Snakes are often feared and misunderstood by humans, but they are incredibly beneficial creatures. They keep pest populations, such as rats and mice, in check.

BENEFITS OF SNAKES

Like all animals in the web of life, snakes play an important role in maintaining a balanced ecosystem. As both predator and prey, snakes form a key link in the food chain.

Snakes maintain sustainable rodent populations by feeding on mice and other small rodents that may damage crops and carry disease. They also serve as a food source to many animals, like coyotes and raptors. Remember, all creatures on this planet have a role to play. We need snakes, because without them, our local ecosystem would be out of balance.

NATURAL HISTORY

- Snakes can be found throughout the continental United States. They can adapt to a wide variety of habitats, including urban areas, where they are often found in parks and gardens.
- Snakes are carnivores, meaning they eat only meat. Snakes do not have the right type of teeth for chewing, so they eat their prey whole. Snakes commonly eat rats, birds and their eggs, mice, frogs, and other small rodents. Some species, like the DeKay's brownsnake, eat insects and earthworms.
- Snake social behavior varies amongst species. While the majority of snake species prefer a solitary existence (with the exception of mating), studies have found that some species, like the non-venomous garter snake, actually have extensive social networks.
- Location and climate affects when snakes are most active. They can be diurnal (active during the day) or nocturnal (active at night).



DEER

TIPS FOR REDUCING HUMAN-DEER CONFLICTS:

- **Do not feed wildlife.** This increases the chance that the animal will lose its natural fear of humans.
- **Do not move "abandoned" fawns.** Mothers feed babies only twice a day—at dawn and dusk. Fawns found alone are typically not orphans.
- **Do not approach or attempt to pet deer.** They seem friendly, but are wild! Deer bites can cause injury and carry disease. Though rare, rutting bucks may charge approaching humans.
- **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.
- **Remain deer aware while driving.** Slow down and remain vigilant, particularly at dusk and dawn.
- **Keep them out of your garden.** A well constructed fence is the most effective way to protect your plants.

BENEFITS OF DEER

Deer are considered a keystone species, meaning their existence in an ecosystem directly impacts the lives of other plants and animals. At a sustainable population, deer increase biodiversity and encourage new plant growth.

Their scat adds nutrients to the soil, and their grazing allows more sunlight to reach the forest floor so smaller plants can grow. They also serve as an important food source for larger predators, like bobcats.

NATURAL HISTORY

- Deer are members of the Cervidae family. They are common throughout the continental United States. They can be found in several habitats, but prefer forests, thickets, prairies and savannas. They are commonly found in urban areas in parks and open spaces.
- Deer are herbivores, meaning they eat only plants. They are browsers, and feed primarily on foliage of grasses, sedges, forbs, shrubs and trees,
- Deer are social creatures and typically live in herds. The does and fawns herd together in social groups. Young males form groups called stag herds, which split up during mating season. Bucks sometimes form loose groups, but typically prefer a solitary existence as they get older.
- Deer are primarily crepuscular (active at dawn and dusk) and nocturnal (active at night).



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.