

## Skunks

The first step in learning to live in harmony with urban wildlife is to understand that animals are by nature opportunistic and will take advantage of any source of food and shelter they can find. By reducing these resources the level of conflicts will naturally decline. Skunks are one of the most common sources of human/wildlife conflicts.

**More information  
is available on the following  
websites:**

[www.caht.ca](http://www.caht.ca)

[www.ospca.on.ca](http://www.ospca.on.ca)

[www.wildneighbors.org](http://www.wildneighbors.org)

[www.cfhs.ca/Programs/HumaneEducation/  
GeneralPublic/UrbanWildlife](http://www.cfhs.ca/Programs/HumaneEducation/GeneralPublic/UrbanWildlife)

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# Skunks

Courtesy of AAA  
Wildlife Control Ltd.



**Do you  
have a  
skunk  
problem?**

Affix label here

## How do I know whether I may have a skunk problem?

Frequent skunk sightings at dusk and dawn together with lawns dug up (Skunks are in search of insect larvae and grubs) and/or tunneling leading under a porch, shed or other structure may indicate the presence of skunks.

## What can I do to make my property unattractive to skunks?

Animal proof your property, which includes:

- Making garbage and composting inaccessible to animals.
- Only putting garbage out for pick-up on the morning of the collection day.
- Not leaving pet-food out at night.
- Securing the perimeter of sheds, porches, decks, etc. by digging a 30cm to 40cm deep trench around the perimeter of such structures and installing a wire screen (16 ga. galvanized wire mesh, size 1" x 1", shaped in an "L", placed flush around each structure so that the toe of the "L" points outward) and back-filling the trench. An opening at the point of entry should be left and only closed when all animals have left, usually between July and November.
- Covering window-wells.
- Applying environmentally-friendly nematodes to your lawn to control grubs (contact your local garden centre).



## What should I do if I have a skunk problem?

To help minimize conflicts with skunks make your property unattractive to them by following some of the suggestions on the previous page. Frequently skunks get trapped in window-wells. Since they are notoriously poor climbers you can help them escape by placing a 6" wide plank in the window well, providing a gradual slope to permit the skunk to use it as a ramp to escape. If the problem persists for 24 hours, or if assistance is required with other skunk problems, contact a local wildlife rehabilitator, animal control center, humane society or a humane wildlife control company to discuss humane solutions.

## Since wildlife control companies are not government licensed, what should I look for when hiring a wildlife control company?

- Make sure that the company has been in business for a minimum of 5 years, since there is a high turnover of wildlife removal companies.
- Query whether the company is in compliance with the OMNR Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act.
- Request an on-site free written estimate.
- Ask if they provide a full range of animal proofing.
- Confirm that the company carries business liability Insurance.
- Ask for a minimum one year guarantee against animal re-entry.
- Ask for referrals.
- Request a referral from your local animal welfare or animal care and control agency.

## Why not trap and relocate skunks?

Under the Ontario Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act wildlife must be released in close proximity to the original point of capture. Trapping is not an effective method of wildlife control. It does not address the primary reason why an unwanted animal is on the property, which is the availability of food and shelter. Unless the attractant is removed, the animal will return or a new animal will move in.

As well, relocation of trapped animals creates a new set of potential problems that include:

- Animals may be released in areas where populations are already at maximum levels.
- Relocated animals may transmit diseases to other wildlife in the release area.
- During certain times of the year the young may be left behind when they are unable to fend for themselves.
- Trapping and relocating animals late in the season prevents them from accessing shelter and food sources and may result in starvation or death from exposure.

