

Striped Skunk

Mephitis mephitis

Description

The Striped Skunk is best known for its awful smell! It is the most common skunk species in North America and is widely found in our Rocky Mountains, but less so in Northern Canada, preferring a somewhat warmer climate, lower elevations and varied habitats, wherever food and water are accessible. Skunks tend to live in a territory that is no more than about 2 miles (3.2 km) from their home den. They can be found in grasslands, woods and meadows, in rural and urban areas. The Striped Skunk's average size is about 20-30 inches (50 to 75 cm) long, including the tail. It weighs 6 to 10 pounds (2.7 to 4.5 kg). Males are a bit larger. This is about the same size as a house cat. They are easily identified by the white stripes that start with a triangle at its head, and break into two stripes down its back, meeting again at the base of the tail. The white stripe of the skunk can even be seen in its skin! It has a small triangular head and little ears. Its legs are short, and it has webbed toes and claws that it uses for digging and searching for food. They live an average of 2 to 4 years in the wild.

FUN FACTS

- A female skunk is called a doe, the male is called a back, the young are called kits and a group is called a surfeit.
- Skunks have poor eyesight but excellent senses of hearing and smell. This means they can't always see you coming!
- Skunk can spray up to 12 feet (3.7 m) and the odour can be smelled up to 1.5 miles (2.4 km) away.
- Skunks are mostly solitary and are most active at night when they look for food sources for their omnivorous diet.

If you find an injured or orphaned wild animal in distress, please contact the Calgary Wildlife Rehabilitation Society hotline at **403-214-1312** for tips, instructions and advice, or visit the website for more information www.calgarywildlife.org



Photo Credit: Andrea S. H. Hunt

Contact Us

 11555—85th Street NW, Calgary, AB T3R 1J3
 403-214-1312

 admin@calgarywildlife.org
 calgarywildlife.org

 @calgarywildlife
 @calgarywildlife
 @Calgary_wildlife