

Striped Skunk Natural History



- **Scientific name: Mephitis mephitis**
- **Average overall adult length is 21-27” including tail of 9-13” and weight is 3-12 pounds. Fur is long, especially on the tail and the head is small in comparison to the rest of the body**
- **Dark black body distinctively marked with white stripe(s) which begin at the head and continue onto the back and tail.**
- **Claws are long for digging**
- **Average lifespan of 2 years in the wild**
- **An estimated 70% of a skunk's diet consists of insects considered harmful to humans**
- **Chief enemies are automobiles and great horned owls**
- **Capable of speeds up to 10 mph**

Striped Skunk Reproduction



- **Gestation period of 60 days, producing an average litter of 2-5**
- **Breeding season February & April**
- **Usually take over ground hog, rabbit or fox dens**
- **Babies remain in the den for the first six weeks then begin to accompany the mother (single file) to forage for food.**
- **Weaned at 8 weeks but will often stay with the mother for up to a year**

Striped Skunk Development



- About 1 ounce and 3-4” long at birth. Blind, deaf, and sparsely furred
- 1 week - 2 ounces and a bit more fur
- 2 weeks – 4 ounces
- 3 weeks – fully furred, ears open, crawl
- 23 days can raise tail, unsteady walk
- 28 days – 9 ounces, 10” long, can discharge musk, teeth erupting
- 4-4.5 weeks eyes open
- 32 days – 14-15”
- 6 weeks – scent glands fully developed, accompany mother single file to forage
- 12 weeks - independent

- Skunks are crepuscular which means they come out mostly at dawn and dusk but will come out at any time of the day or night if food is available
- Skunks are non-aggressive, gentle creatures
- Skunk spray is accurate up to 10' and can go as far as 25' but they will issue a warning prior to spraying by stamping their front feet. You can avoid being sprayed by backing slowly away and not making any sudden moves or loud noises. Once they bend their body into a U shape, they are ready to spray.

