

## Skunks

North Carolina has both the [eastern spotted skunk](#) and the [striped skunk](#). The eastern spotted skunk is much more elusive than the striped skunk and only occurs in the western part of the state. The Commission asks anyone that sees a spotted skunk to report it to the iNaturalist Eastern Spotted Skunk Project at <https://www.inaturalist.org/projects/eastern-spotted-skunk> or email Colleen Olfenbuttel at [colleen.olfenbuttel@ncwildlife.org](mailto:colleen.olfenbuttel@ncwildlife.org). Spotted skunks are much smaller (about the size a large squirrel) than striped skunks and have an upside-down triangle shaped white spot on their heads. Striped skunks are about the size of a large cat, have a narrow white stripe down the center of their faces, and usually have two stripes going down their backs. Click [here](#) for more information on how to distinguish between the two species.

**What kind of damage is caused by skunks?** Spotted skunks rarely cause problems with people, they tend to avoid human development. Striped skunks are commonly found and can thrive in neighborhoods. The most common complaint is about skunk odor. Please note that a skunk spraying in the area does not count as property damage and a depredation permit should not be issued. Skunks can cause lawn and turf damage by digging for grubs in an individual's yard.

**Can a WCA write a depredation permit?** Yes, a WCA can write depredation permits for skunks.

**Can they be relocated?** No, skunks are considered a rabies vector species and therefore cannot be relocated. If trapped, the animals must be released on site, euthanized at the capture site, or taken to a facility that is designed to humanely handle the euthanasia.

**What can I do with sick or injured skunks?** Because skunks are a rabies vector species they cannot be rehabilitated. Advise individuals to leave the animal alone. If the skunk has a life-threatening injury or illness, it should be humanely euthanized and disposed of in a safe and sanitary manner.

**Are there any safety concerns?** Yes, skunks can have rabies. If someone or his/her pet has been bitten or scratched by a skunk, refer the individual to their county health department.

Skunks will spray defensively, so be cautious when handling. If an individual or pet has been sprayed, mixing 1 quart of 3% peroxide, ¼ cup of baking soda, and 1 table spoon of liquid dish detergent and applying it to the affected area can help eliminate the odor. Do not store or premix this solution as it is volatile.

### Non-lethal Options:

- See the [General Considerations for Handling Wildlife](#) document to for general ways to prevent conflicts with wildlife.
- Exclusion
  - Use chicken wire or hardware cloth to cover any openings at the base of structures. It is best to bury 1 foot of the chicken wire or hardware cloth in the ground with the last 6 inches bent away from the building. This ensures that even if the skunk tries to dig underneath it will hit the barrier.

- Harassment
  - Spraying the skunks with water can help deter them from yards.

Lethal Options:

- Striped skunks can be taken year-round with a valid hunting license. A landowner does not need a hunting license to hunt on his/her own property.
- Skunks can be trapped during the established trapping season with a valid trapping license. A landowner does not need to purchase a trapping license to trap on his/her own property. Advise individuals to review the [Best Management Practices](#) for trapping skunks.
- Outside of the trapping season, a depredation permit is required to trap skunks.

Eastern Spotted Skunk



Erin Ragheb

Striped Skunk



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