

In general:

Ω Do not feed wild animals! Remove all food sources. Feeding makes them dependent upon man for survival, alters the dynamics of natural population control, and encourages the species to breed beyond the capacity of the area to support such numbers. Feeding creates a false ecosystem that eventually backfires and, in the end, the animals will suffer.

Ω **A 3' high wire mesh fence** extended 6" beneath the ground surface will keep skunks out. Young skunks and spotted skunks may occasionally scale the fence but this behavior is rare

Ω **To skunk-proof houses or out-buildings**, seal all openings but **one** with heavy mesh or boards securely fastened to the building. Spread flour around the remaining opening. After finding no footprints for at least 3 days, seal the remaining opening. Be sure not to trap any skunks inside and do not do this during the spring as there may be baby skunks under the building. If they cannot get out, they will die and you will have another, equally unpleasant, type odor problem.

Ω **If you have a den currently in use**, try this: sound, water, lights, cayenne pepper, and strong odors like ammonia often make skunks uncomfortable enough to move away. Vary the deterrents so they do not become used to them. **Do not startle the skunk or it will probably spray you.**

Ω **Bring pets in at dusk** to avoid smelly confrontations.

Ω **Clear piles of debris** that encourage skunk's natural food sources (mice, rats, and insects).

Ω Make sure compost piles are put in sturdy, enclosed containers.

Good luck!

For more information or assistance, contact:

W.I.L.D.E. Service
(805) 687-9980 (messages)
(805) 887-3574 (pager)

You may send donations to:
1560 N. Ontare Rd.
Santa Barbara, CA 93105

Santa Barbara County
Animal Services
(805) 681-5285 (SB)
(805) 737-7755 (Lom)
(805) 934-6119 (SM)

Santa Barbara City Animal Control
(805) 963-1513

Agricultural Commissioner's
Office
(805) 681-5600

<http://www.co.santa-barbara.ca.us/agcomm/index.htm>

A NOTE:

Live trapping is not a recommended solution to ridding your property and yard of skunks. Because they are around in such numbers, trapping is only a temporary solution and not humane. It won't be long before another one **or more** is attracted to your home especially if you haven't dealt with those issues that attracted them in the first place! For valid reasons, governmental animal related agencies do not recommend relocation as a solution and will euthanize all trapped skunks if called for problem management

Peaceful Co-existence With Skunks



Compliments of:

**Wildlife
Information
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Sadly, most people never actually see a live skunk except in zoos. If it were not for the frequent road casualties, you would seldom see them at all. It is far more likely that you will smell them. Few people can say they haven't had that experience.

Of the wild animals one might encounter, the skunk is probably the least aggressive. Because of its malodorous defense weapon, which it only uses when startled or attacked, it doesn't have too many natural enemies. This level of confidence causes most to fall prey to cars, owls, coyotes and dogs.....

When grown, striped skunks are about the size of a house cat. Nature has marked them in bold black and white patterns to warn anything they encounter.

There are two types of skunks commonly found in Santa Barbara County. The most common of the two is the striped skunk. The other is its smaller cousin, the spotted skunk, which has the amusing defense posture of standing on its hands as a warning.

Skunks are nocturnal animals that become active around dusk foraging until dawn. It is during this food gathering exercise that skunks do most of the damage to your property. Skunks are omnivorous, eating anything from insects, small rodents, to

various types of fruit and vegetables. While searching for food in the soil, they are known to disturb gardens and lawns. Also, if you leave food out for your animals, they will readily take advantage of this free meal meant for your pets. Overall, however, skunks are more beneficial than they are destructive.

Skunks are nomadic and seldom stay in one place for long other than during spring when females burrow to raise their young. Skunks get into trouble with their human neighbors during breeding season because of the odor they freely disperse upon each other during the breeding process. Once mating has been successful, the males wander off continuing their nomadic lifestyle while the pregnant females search for den sites that often happen to be under houses, decks, woodpiles or other uncleared areas of debris. Other than scratching noises, they are usually well behaved until the youngsters are close to weaning. This is about the only time you will see skunks out during daylight hours. Once they become more experienced, they will be fully nocturnal.



Spotted Skunk



Infant skunk

Skunks are able to use their odor glands almost from birth and many do so when roughhousing with each other or when startled by a real or imaginary intruder. They have poor eyesight.

Most nuisance complaints concerning skunks relate to odor problems they have caused. Many pets have unwittingly triggered this weapon much to the chagrin of the irate owner who has to deodorize the family pet. If you or your pet is sprayed by a skunk, contrary to common myth, tomato juice is not the best remedy. There are a number of better and less messy choices such as any tearless shampoo and water, or mouthwash, or a mild bleach and water solution. In all cases, be extremely careful not to get any in the animal's eyes. Clothing can be run through one regular wash and dry cycle. Just Remember that the spray has an oily base and detergent will remove it. There are many good commercial deodorizers on the market as well.

To expect skunks to change their behavior is unrealistic. Trapping and relocating them or eradicating them all is **not** the answer. There are ways to peacefully co-exist and take advantage of the positive contributions that skunks make to the environment