Living in Harmony with...

SKUNKS

*Mephitis mephitis*

**Fast Facts**

**General Appearance**
black with white stripe and fluffy tail, long body with short, well-muscled legs and long front claws for digging.

**Territory**
suburban areas near water. Nomadic, but females den in spring with their babies.

**Diet**
omnivorous diet consisting of bugs, rodents, pet food (when left outside), fruits and vegetables.

**Lifestyle**
mostly nocturnal

**Lifespan**
up to 7 years

**Size**
4-12 pounds

**Rabies Vector Species**
yes

**SBWCN cares for**
approximately
40 per year

**Reasons why skunks come into our care:**

- Car strikes
- Emaciation
- Orphaned
- Mange
- Parasites
- Traps
- Poison

**Living in Harmony**

- Do not leave pet food outside
- Keep cats indoors
- Do not let your pets out unsupervised after dark
- Make sure your trash cans have tight lids and that the cans are secured in some way as not to be toppled
- Put heavy gauge mesh on vents, openings to structures, and under sheds to prevent denning.
- Pick up fallen fruit. Try to pick ripe fruit off trees
- Do not leave windows or sliding doors without screens open and unattended. Close garage doors
- Never intentionally feed a wild animal!

Feeding wildlife increases human encounters, which endangers animals and harms the ecosystem.

*FLIP OVER FOR MORE*
**Skunk Fun Facts:**

1. There are two types of skunks in SB:
   - the **striped skunk**, and the less common **spotted skunk**
2. Striped skunks stomp their front paws as a warning before spraying
3. Skunks can spray up to 12 ft. away

**Why not trap and relocate?**

- Live-trapping and relocation is inhumane
    *Animals are introduced into areas that are unfamiliar to them so they do not know where food, water, or shelter sources are. Other animals in the area may have diseases to which the introduced animal has never been exposed, and the introduced animal may be encroaching on another's territory.*
- Trapping is only a temporary solution
    *The reasons animals are visiting your property must be addressed before they stop visiting.*
- Traps often do not catch the intended targets
    *Other animals, including pets, are just as likely to enter traps set for skunks. Animals caught in traps often injure themselves trying to escape.*

**If you encounter a skunk:**

- Do not startle it
- Talk softly so they know where you are and can avoid you
- Back away slowly
- Keep children and pets away
- Do not get between a mother and her babies

※※ Sometimes young skunks explore in the daytime while their mother is asleep. Unless they look injured or sick, they are probably fine.

**If a skunk needs help...**

- Since skunks have the potential to spread rabies, call the Santa Barbara Wildlife Care Network and we will send a rescuer who is rabies vaccinated to rescue the skunk:
    - **Helpline:** (805) 681-1080
- You can also call Santa Barbara County Animal Services: (805) 681-5285
- Or Santa Barbara City Animal Control if you’re in the city of SB: (805) 963-1513

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**Helpline:** (805) 681-1080  
**Office line:** (805) 681-1019  
**contact@sbwcn.org**

**Website:** www.sbwcn.org

**Address:** 1460 N. Fairview Ave, Goleta, CA 93117

**Mailing Address:** P.O. Box 6594 Santa Barbara, CA 93160

**Tax ID:** 77-0201505

*Santa Barbara Wildlife Care Network is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization*

*Info sourced from SBWCN and SB WILDES*