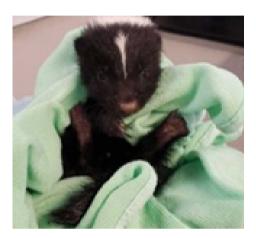


California Wildlife Center Patient of the Week July 7, 2023



SSkunk kit being evaluated upon admission

Striped Skunks

California Wildlife Center has admitted 31 Striped Skunks into our care since April 2023. Most of the skunks that arrived at our facility were orphaned kits (0-10 months of age), who were brought to us after having been separated from their mothers. As soon as each of the kits arrived at our facility, our team provided immediate medical attention and stabilized their condition.

It is crucial that we mimic the diet that the orphaned kits would receive in the wild. Initially, the kits were bottled fed with a specialized formula. As they grew older, they became more independent and were weaned off bottles to eat solid food, which consisted of eggs, fruits, vegetables, and fish.

During their rehabilitation, we offered enrichment that reflected their natural environments and provided opportunities for physical exercise and mental stimulation. The kits were kept in groups, where they could socialize with one another. This assisted with creating healthy social bonds and minimizing the negative effects of separation. They were also provided with structures in their enclosures to encourage exploration, such as dens and a large wheel for climbing and exercise.

The recent release of 12 adolescent skunks, with more scheduled to be released in the upcoming weeks, is a testament to CWC's successful rehabilitation efforts!

While their pungent odor may cause apprehension among some, it is essential to recognize that coexistence with skunks is not only possible but also beneficial. Here are some tips and tricks to help you avoid unwanted confrontations:

1.Remove attractions: Skunks are attracted to easily accessible food sources. Avoid leaving pet food, water or birdseed outside overnight. If you have fruit trees, be sure to pick up any fruit that has fallen on the ground.

2.Secure Entry Points: Skunks can burrow under fences or access yards through gaps or holes. Regularly inspect your yard for potential entry points and seal them off. Use hardware cloth or wire mesh to cover openings under decks, sheds, or porches.



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3.Keep Pets Supervised: When pets encounter skunks, they may be curious or overly enthusiastic. Keep pets on a leash or within a secure area when outside, especially during nighttime hours.

4. Give space: If you encounter a skunk, give them space to move away. Back away slowly and quietly, allowing the skunk to retreat to a safe distance. Warning signs that a skunk is getting ready to spray include stomping their front feet, raising their tail, and hissing.

Skunks contribute significantly to the ecosystem. Their scavenger behavior assists with pest control as they will prey on insects, rodents, and garden-damaging insects like grubs. When they feed on fruits or plant material, they may transport seeds in their droppings to new locations, helping with plant reproduction and the spread of plant diversity.

It is important to remember that skunks are essential to a healthy habitat. Living peacefully with wildlife is not only doable but valuable to us all!