



California Wildlife Center

Patient of the Week

September 12, 2025

Snap! A Skunk's Second Chance

Picture this- you're just going about your day, looking for something to eat, when suddenly- snap! - you're caught in a trap. That's exactly what happened to one of our recent Striped Skunk patients. The juvenile skunk was found by an animal control officer who freed the animal and brought them to California Wildlife Center for medical care.

The trap was on the patient's right leg. When examined by veterinarian, Dr. Purdin, he observed that the young skunk wasn't putting weight on their right front leg and was dragging it with their wrist bent. He also noted significant swelling, along with a wound on the upper side of the leg, between the elbow and wrist. To get a clearer picture, the skunk was lightly sedated for radiographs, which, fortunately, showed no fractures. After cleaning the wound, medication was applied, and a specialized bandage was placed to provide light compression, to help reduce the swelling and hold the dressing in place.

While in care the patient has been alert and rambunctious, often seen stomping their feet (a warning sign that the skunk may spray) and sometimes even spraying hospital staff. After a few days, the inflammation had significantly decreased, and the wound was closed and in the process of healing.

For enrichment, a bin filled with shredded newspaper and mealworms scattered throughout has been supplied to keep the patient's foraging instincts active.

Over the past few weeks, the skunk has continued to improve; their appetite has been good, and they no longer need the protective bandage on their leg. There is some residual scabbing but that is expected to heal. We are optimistic that this skunk will rejoin the wild very soon!

It is important to note that skunks can carry the rabies virus and members of the public should never touch or interact with them. If you suspect a skunk is sick, injured or orphaned, please call your local rehabilitation center to assess the next best steps.



Specialized bandage on the patient's right leg provides light compression



Striped Skunk moved into outdoor enclosure