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## Iowa State University Veterinarian

### Striped Skunk - Pet or Threat

Phil McCune. *Iowa State University*

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Article

#### Abstract

Among the various species the veterinarian may be called upon to render his services to is the striped skunk (*Mephitis mephitis*). These small (3 1/2 - 10 lbs.), short-eared, long-tailed carnivores are best known for their characteristic black and white striped color and unpleasant odor. To the practicing veterinarian they must be viewed not only as pets but as potential public health threats.

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*Mephitis mephitis*, the striped skunk, is a medium sized mustelid that is widespread and increasing distribution across its native range in Southern... Striped skunk-pet or threat. Iowa State University Veterinarian, 35(No.2), 52-54. Neiswenter, S. A., Dowler, R. C., 2007. The striped skunk (*Mephitis mephitis*) is a skunk of the genus *Mephitis* that occurs across most of North America, including southern Canada, the United States, and northern Mexico. It is currently listed as least concern by the IUCN on account of its wide range and ability to adapt to human-modified environments. Striped skunks are polygamous omnivores with few natural predators, save for birds of prey. Like all skunks, they possess highly developed, musk-filled scent glands to ward off predators. They Threats to striped skunks include severe weather, naturally occurring predation and disease, exposure to chemicals and other human activities. Rabies outbreaks have affected populations in Illinois. Additionally, most states permit skunk harvesting year-round. Avoid single-use plastics, such as plastic bottles, bags and utensils. Choosing reusable options instead can help reduce plastic pollution. Protect local waterways by using fewer pesticides when caring for your garden or lawn. Using fertilizers sparingly, keeping storm drains free of litter and picking up after your pet can also improve watershed health. Where to find the Striped skunk. Animal News.