



## Striped Skunk *Mephitis mephitis*

**Description:** Striped Skunks are small mammals in the weasel family. They are identified by the white stripe that runs down their back. They are about the size of a house cat and have long fur. They have long dull claws that are used for digging and turning over logs for food, and sharp teeth to help them eat the meat they catch.

**Range:** Striped Skunks are found only in North America and their range is from central Canada to northern Mexico.

**Habitat:** Skunks tend to live in open areas with a mix of habitats like woods and grasslands or meadows. It is usually never further than 2 miles from water.

**Life Span:** They live an average of 8 years.

**Natural Diet:** Skunks in the wild are considered omnivores, meaning they eat both plants and animals. They will eat fruits and berries, also eating insects and other small mammals. They will turn over logs and dig holes in search of food.

**Zoo Diet:** Skunks at the zoo get a commercial canine diet and fresh produce.

**Behavior:** Skunks are nocturnal, being mainly active at night time. They are also famous for the ability to spray a smelly, sticky substance from the base of their tail. When threatened the Skunk will first try to run away, then stomp his feet, next they will raise its tail as a warning and only as a last result, will the skunk spray. They can spray several times in a row up to 15 feet away.

**Reproduction:** Mating season is from mid-February to mid-March and the mother will give birth about 2 months later to an average of five skunks per litter.

**Conservation Status:** Least concern

