

## **The Eastern Spotted Skunk**

There are many different types of skunks (just like there are many different types of dogs). Each skunk type has different characteristics, habitats, and usually a different appearance.

### **Habitat**

The eastern spotted skunk is usually found in the mid-eastern to eastern North America. Its habitat ranges from South Texas and South Florida towards the Canadian border. It is most prevalent in the following states: Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, Florida, Tennessee, North Carolina, Virginia, Missouri, Oklahoma, Kansas, Nebraska, South Dakota, Iowa, and Minnesota. These skunks most often prefer forested areas.

### **Appearance**

Unlike the striped skunk, the Eastern Spotted Skunk appears to have spots across its body. While it appears to be spots its actually stripes that zigzag across the body of the skunk making it appear that the skunk is indeed spotted (hence the name). As an adult they rarely reach two feet in length and are usually 15-22 inches long making much smaller than the striped skunk. Of course, the striping characteristic (white on black) warns predators of its ability to defend itself with a powerful musk which is sprayed from a gland near the rear of the skunk in self-defense.

### **Demeanor**

The eastern spotted skunks are more active than most other skunk breeds and have the same predators including wolves, coyote, large cats, humans, birds, etc. Eastern spotted skunks will usually climb trees to escape such predators and because of their climbing skills it's not unusual for the skunks to climb trees to prey on birds and their eggs. The skunk is a nocturnal and solitary and will usually only come in contact with another skunk during breeding season to produce offspring.

### **Breeding**

Eastern spotted skunks usually breed in the later winter months and give birth in late spring to early summer. On average the female skunk will give birth to 4 to 5 kits (baby skunks). It takes twelve weeks for the skunks to fully develop and two months before they can produce skunk musk and use it as self-defense.

Henderson, Scott and Tallman, Angie. "Eastern Spotted Skunk". Fall 2001. Pensacola Junior College. 29 Jan. 2011. <  
<http://itech.pjc.edu/sctag/Eastern%20Spotted%20Skunk/Eastern%20Spotted%20Skunk.htm>>.

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