



PRESS RELEASE

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July 4, 2026

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SEAL BEACH POLICE DEPARTMENT OFFERS WILDLIFE SKUNK GUIDANCE

SEAL BEACH, CA — Skunks are a normal part of the Southern California environment, including in coastal communities like Seal Beach. While their odor can be unpleasant and their presence may surprise residents, routine skunk activity is generally not a law enforcement or animal control issue and is not typically handled by Seal Beach Police Department Animal Control.

According to Professor Ted Stankowich, a biological sciences professor at California State University, Long Beach, and a wildlife expert, skunks are generally nocturnal, omnivorous animals that come out around dusk or early evening to search for food. They are not normally aggressive and are often attracted to easy food sources such as insects, fruit, eggs, pet food, trash, and other items commonly found around homes and yards.

This time of year may also bring more noticeable skunk activity due to baby skunk season. In warmer climates like Southern California, skunks may mate earlier in the year, with young skunks, called kits, beginning to emerge and explore with their families in late spring and early summer. Mother skunks may be more defensive when protecting their young, so residents are encouraged to give skunks space and avoid trying to scare, chase, feed, trap, or handle them.

The Seal Beach Police Department encourages residents to reduce attractants around their homes. The CSULB Mammal Lab recommends keeping pet food indoors, securing trash cans, removing fallen fruit, and blocking access to areas under decks, sheds, or homes where skunks may den. Skunks are drawn to available food sources, and reducing those attractants is one of the best ways to discourage them from spending time on private property.

If you see a skunk, remain calm, keep pets leashed or indoors, and slowly give the animal space. Skunks usually provide warning signs before spraying, including stomping, hissing, raising their tail, or turning their back. Residents should not attempt to capture, relocate, or harm skunks.

For residents whose pets are sprayed, the CSULB Mammal Lab notes that tomato juice is a myth and does not remove the odor. Instead, the recommended deodorizing mixture is one quart of hydrogen peroxide, one-quarter cup of baking soda, and one teaspoon of liquid dish soap. The mixture should be made fresh each time, used immediately, and never stored in a sealed container. Residents should avoid using bleach on people or pets.

SBPD Animal Control generally does not respond to routine wildlife sightings, nuisance odors, or normal skunk activity. However, residents may contact SBPD if an animal appears sick, injured, trapped, unusually aggressive, or is creating an immediate public safety concern. For skunks living under a home, deck, or other structure, residents should consider contacting a licensed wildlife exclusion or pest management professional.

The Seal Beach Police Department thanks Professor Ted Stankowich and the CSULB Mammal Lab for their helpful public education on skunk behavior and practical steps residents can take to safely coexist with local wildlife.

For more information, residents may review the CSULB Mammal Lab's "Dealing with Striped Skunks" resource: <https://www.csulb.edu/biological-sciences/mammal-lab/dealing-striped-skunks>

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