



Skunk prowls at night

By Timothy Nowicki
special writer

RETURNING home late one evening, I noticed something out of the corner of my eye as I turned the corner toward home.

My car headlights picked up something on my neighbor's lawn. At first I thought it was a piece of trash. It looked long and narrow. My curiosity got the better of me, so I turned the car around and aimed the headlights toward the object.

There in the glare of my headlights was a beautiful striped skunk. It had very prominent white stripes that extended from the top of its head down each side of its back.

As I watched the animal scratching under the leaves, looking for insects, worms, or even acorns, he seemed oblivious to my curiosity. He was intent on feeding in order to put on a layer of fat, which will help him stay warm this winter and serve as his food supply.

Skunks eat a variety of things, including garbage ready for trash pickup. Their general diet and nocturnal habits

nature

enable them to survive and co-exist with man.

In most cases, we do not know we have skunks around unless we see a dead one on the roadway or smell one walk by the window.

Individuals spend the day in a burrow or under a woodpile, or in any number of secluded hideaways. At night they emerge from their den and begin feeding.

My wife and I recall seeing a mother and four young cross the road about 20 feet ahead of us on one of our evening walks. Mom was so busy looking about for danger and keeping tabs on all the little stinkers that she did not bother with a couple of casual observers.

Though the occasional smell of a skunk in the neighborhood can be obnoxious, it does not last forever, and I enjoy knowing that there are various forms of wildlife — even in the city.

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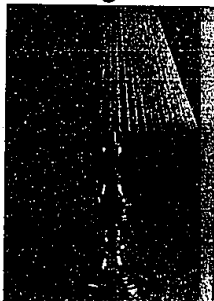
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