

## Celebrating Ohio Wildlife: Coyote and Skunk

In two articles on Ohio Wildlife, we have discovered some interesting facts on the deer, fox, wild turkey, and the beaver. Of course, there are plenty more animals which call our great state of Ohio home. In part 3 of our Ohio Wildlife species, we will feature the coyote and the skunk. In this article we will discuss their habitat, diet, behavioral characteristics, as well as, some new interesting facts that may not be well-known.

First, we will start with the coyote. One thing that is interesting about the coyote is that is native to Ohio, but it can make a home in a wide variety of places and now call Ohio home. The coyote is a member of the canine family which means that they are closely related to other species such as the fox and your pet dog. The Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) writes that the coyote was revered in American folklore with stories that it was looked upon as a symbol of conflict resolution and intelligence. This animal is a slender animal that is comparable in appearance to a medium-sized dog.

Coyotes fall in the category of nocturnal animals, meaning that they go out during the overnight hours to do their hunting while generally remaining secluded during the daylight hours. Given this fact, it is certainly not uncommon to see the coyote moving around during the daylight hours on rare occasions and when there is minimal human presence. The coyote has an omnivore type of diet which means that they will include both plants and animals in their diet. Common foods of the coyote include: moles, rabbits, mice), various vegetables, as well as, nuts. ODNR notes that it is not uncommon for coyote to go after certain livestock that are out with preference given to sheep and chickens. Be on the lookout for coyotes if you have either of these animals at home.

Coyote pups are typically born between April and May in litters that can range anywhere from 1-12 pups. It is the job of both the male and female coyote together to care for and tend to their young by bringing them food and eventually teaching them how to hunt for food on their own. Only when the coyotes are newborns will the male take the lead role in caring for the young pups.

Coyotes are found in all 88 counties in Ohio so it is not an uncommon sight to see in your backyard. Fear not, ODNR has some tips to consider should a coyote venture into your backyard. First, it is important to know that they can be found everywhere, in both rural and urban settings. Identification is also a great thing to keep in mind to ensure clear identification between a dog and coyote. ODNR writes that coyotes are overall gray with a rusty orange color mixed in with a bushy tail that has a black tip. Should a coyote come on your property, ODNR insists that homeowners remove any possible “attractants” for the coyotes which include covering your garbage cans if they are outdoors or even any pet food that might be left out.

Another animal that calls Ohio home is the skunk. Now the skunk is not always a welcome sight to many people primarily due to its smelly reputation. Just like the coyote, the skunk is found in all of Ohio’s 88 counties and can also make itself home in both rural and urbanized environments. Skunks are comparable in size to a house cat

with a large body, small head, short legs, and its notable white stripe that runs down its back. The white stripes on the skunk will form a “V” shape from its head to its tail.

ODNR says that it is the adaptability of the skunk that has allowed it to survive as humans have spread out into new areas. Skunks are animals that look for any easy opportunity to find food which is quite easy in any setting as we leave our garbage out which has food scraps the skunks are looking for. Interesting about the skunk is the fact that they are an omnivorous animal which means that they will eat a diet that consists of both plants and animals. Some things included in the diet of the skunk are: insects, fish, crustaceans such as snails, fruits, grasses, grains, and also nuts. The skunk will be active at night and solitary during the day so it shares the nocturnal lifestyle.

One thing that everyone asks about when it comes to skunks is usually ways that you can get rid of the smell quickly if one is lucky enough to get sprayed. Commonly you might have heard of taking a bath in tomato juice as one option while another option is to mix 1 quart of hydrogen peroxide, ¼ cup of baking soda, and 1 teaspoon of liquid detergent. For specific mix instructions, visit <http://www.housecleaningcentral.com/en/cleaning-tips/odor-removal/how-to-get-rid-of-skunk-smell.html>.

Stay tuned to further installments on more wildlife that call Ohio home!