

**GROSS-OUT  
DEFENSES**

# Smelly SKUNKS

by  
**Catherine Nichols**

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# Smelly SKUNKS

by Catherine Nichols

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# A Smelly Weapon

It's dinnertime and a group of hungry foxes has spotted a tasty treat—a skunk.

The skunk is too slow to outrun its **enemies**.

So it raises its bushy tail and sprays a stinky oil.


Phew! A horrible smell fills the air.

The oil stings the foxes' eyes.

They can't run away fast enough!





A photograph of a red fox and its cub in a grassy field. The adult fox is standing on a mound of earth, looking down at the cub. The cub is lying down, sniffing a piece of wood. In the foreground, a skunk is walking away from the camera, its tail raised. The background is a dense forest.

A skunk's oil  
smells awful! Some  
people say the odor  
reminds them of  
burnt rubber or even  
rotten eggs!



# Under the Tail

All skunks can spray a smelly oil, called musk, when they're in danger.

The musk is stored in two small pouches under the animal's tail.

The pouches hold enough musk for about six sprays.

When the pouches are empty, it takes the skunk a few days to make more musk.





A skunk can spray as far as 15 feet (5 m). The stinky oil can sting enemies' eyes and make them feel sick. The musk is not deadly, but its bad smell can stick around for days!



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**Bekkering, Annalise.** *Skunks*. New York: Weigl Publishers (2007).

**Mason, Adrienne.** *Skunks*. Toronto, Canada: Kids Can Press (2006).

**Swanson, Diane.** *Welcome to the World of Skunks*. Vancouver, Canada: Whitecap Books (1999).

## Learn More Online

To learn more about skunks, visit  
[www.bearportpublishing.com/GrossOutDefenses](http://www.bearportpublishing.com/GrossOutDefenses)

## About the Author

Catherine Nichols has written many books for children, including several on animals. She lives in upstate New York with her dog and two cats.





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# Smelly SKUNKS

Don't mess with a skunk! When these creatures think they're in danger, they spray a stinky oil at their enemies. The oil isn't deadly, but it sure smells awful. Look inside to find many more fascinating facts about these smelly creatures!

**Bloody Horned Lizards**  
**Deadly Poison Dart Frogs**

**Disgusting Hagfish**  
**Prickly Porcupines**

**Smelly Skunks**  
**Tricky Opossums**

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