

In preparing for her young the female skunk seeks out some hole or covered place, such as that afforded by a barn or old building, where she can make her way beneath the foundation. She then locates a convenient grass patch where the old growth lies thickly and by means of her long claws rakes this up into bunches and drags it to her burrow, always moving backwards, by which means the long claws are used to full advantage. Several nights are occupied over this work and a vast amount of grass taken in before she becomes satisfied. In this nest are born several young, six probably being an average. Here they are reared and remain out of sight for some little time. Later they follow their mother in her wanderings after food, but it is quite late in the season before they finally separate; indeed, on some occasions they are said to winter in the same burrow.

Our species seems to be an almost omnivorous feeder, readily devouring anything in the animal line from an evil-smelling bug to a rabbit, while various fruits as well as ordinary vegetable matter is consumed. Nor must we forget eggs, of which they are very fond. But the choicest titbits of all seem to be insects; grasshoppers are taken wholesale and eaten with the utmost relish. If it were not for their habits of raiding poultry houses and their fondness for eggs it seems probable that skunks would be classed as almost wholly beneficial, but on account of these habits death is unfortunately often a necessity as it is practically impossible to drive them away. We have known them to take eggs from beneath a brooding hen without disturbing her, and likewise young chickens; at other times fully grown poultry were killed, but as a rule these are not molested when eggs or young are available. In winter time such food as is eaten must be made up almost wholly of rodents and vegetable substances. We have little evidence under this head, but on one occasion, at this season, a freshly cleaned out home revealed much Horsetail (*Equisetum*), which suggests that this plant was used for food and that perhaps, like weasels, skunks store up food for future use.

With reference to the powerful odor for which the animal has become celebrated, much misconception prevails. We are usually led to believe that this scent is carried about as a sort of attraction, not unlike some people's scent bottles, and that a liberal amount is sprinkled over the animal for that purpose, but as a matter of fact nothing is further from the truth, and to meet an odoriferous skunk is as unusual as it is objectionable. In reality they are by no means anxious to part with their perquisite and only do so when closely pursued and when life is endangered. When such emergencies arise, however, they make full use of this weapon, and woe to the enemy that gets