



# Best Management Practices for Construction and Development Projects Plains Spotted Skunk

*Spilogale putorius interrupta*

**Common name** • Plains Spotted Skunk  
**Scientific name** • *Spilogale putorius interrupta*  
**Federal status** • None  
**State status** • Endangered

## Purpose and Use

The information in this document is to be used to help avoid and minimize species impacts due to construction practices. It is not intended to be used as a guide to manage habitat for a given species. If that is the goal, please contact the Department of Conservation for habitat management information. Because every project and location differs, following the recommendations within this document does not ensure that impacts will not occur to the species and additional information might be required in certain instances. Following the recommendations within this document does not complete Endangered Species Act consultation that may be necessary for species listed under the federal Endangered Species Act; please contact the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for more information.

## Ecology

Plains Spotted Skunks historically lived throughout the plains states of the United States from Minnesota south to Texas and from Missouri west to parts of Wyoming and Kansas. They have a smaller, more slender body than striped skunks and typically can be identified by a white triangular patch on the forehead, a solid black tail and four to six broken white stripes extending from the neck along the back and sides. Spotted Skunks are found most commonly in open grasslands, brushy areas and cultivated land. Their dens are located below ground in grassy banks, rocky crevices or along fence rows, as well as above ground in hay stacks, woodpiles, hollow logs or trees or brush heaps. Mating takes place in late winter, and the young are born from April to June. A litter usually contains five young. Plains Spotted Skunks are nocturnal and omnivorous in nature; they eat insects, mice, rats, some birds and vegetables.

## Reasons for Decline

The Plains Spotted Skunk was formerly common in western Missouri, but their populations began declining in the mid-1900s. The decrease may be related to the changes in agriculture that stressed clean farming, thereby leaving little cover for skunks to live in. It also is possible that increased pesticide use in agricultural areas has affected insect abundance, which skunks commonly eat.

## Specific Recommendations

Skunks contribute to the natural control of insects and rodents and should be considered an asset around farms.

- Limit the use of pesticides and herbicides.
- Avoid burning or clearing fence rows, brush piles and downed logs or trees where skunks may be present, especially during the late spring and summer months when young skunks may be in dens.
- Where skunks are unwanted, remove scrap lumber piles, hay stacks and unused farm machinery to eliminate potential skunk habitat.

## General Recommendations

If your project involves the use of Federal Highway Administration transportation funds, these recommendations may not fulfill all contract requirements. Please contact the Missouri Department of Transportation at 573-526-4778 or [www.modot.mo.gov/ehp/index.htm](http://www.modot.mo.gov/ehp/index.htm) for additional information on recommendations.

## Information Contacts

For further information regarding regulations for development near prairies, contact:

For species information:

### [Missouri Department of Conservation](#)

Resource Science Division  
P.O. Box 180  
2901 W. Truman Blvd  
Jefferson City, MO 65102-0180  
Telephone: 573/751-4115

For species information and Endangered Species Act Coordination:

### [U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service](#)

Ecological Services  
101 Park Deville Drive, Suite A  
Columbia, MO 65203-0007  
Telephone: 573/234-2132

For Clean Water Act Coordination:

### [Missouri Department of Natural Resources](#)

Water Protection Program  
P.O. Box 176  
Jefferson City, MO 65102-0176  
Telephone: 573/751-1300, 800/361-4827

[U.S. Army Corps of Engineers](#)

Regulatory Branch  
700 Federal Building  
Kansas City, MO 64106-2896  
Telephone: 816/983-3990

[U.S. Environmental Protection Agency](#)

Water, Wetlands, and Pesticides Division  
901 North 5th Street  
Kansas City, KS 66101  
Telephone: 913/551-7307

**Disclaimer**

These Best Management Practices were prepared by the Missouri Department of Conservation with assistance from state and federal agencies, contractors and others to provide guidance to those people who wish to voluntarily act to protect wildlife and habitat. Compliance with these Best Management Practices is not required by the Missouri wildlife and forestry law nor by any regulation of the Missouri Conservation Commission. Other federal laws such as the Clean Water Act and the Endangered Species Act, and state or local laws need to be considered for construction and development projects, and require permits and/or consultation with the appropriate agency. Following the recommendations provided in this document will help reduce and avoid project impacts to the species, but impacts may still occur. Please contact the appropriate agency for further coordination and to complete compliance requirements.