



Got Skunk?

By Bob Vavrek, regional director, Central Region

October 4, 2016

A fat grub is a tasty treat for raccoons, skunks, armadillos and other critters that call golf courses home. Grubs with an annual life cycle, such as Japanese beetles and northern masked chafers, have usually grown large enough by mid-September to make the effort of ripping up turf worthwhile for an animal. Once a dependable source of food is discovered, animals often return night after night to forage. For obvious reasons, dealing with a skunk requires more caution and planning than dealing with a raccoon, opossum and other less-odorous creatures. There are a variety of relatively inexpensive, tube-type live traps available that make capturing and transporting skunks a fairly simple process. As a result, courses often try their hand at setting live traps to capture nuisance skunks, not realizing they are opening a Pandora's Box of compliance and regulation issues if they are lucky – or unlucky – enough to catch a skunk.



Skunk or raccoon damage? Skunks create a small cone shaped hole in the turf when they forage for grubs whereas raccoons usually tear and roll up turf.

Each state has unique laws and guidelines regarding the removal of nuisance animals. A skunk is considered a furbearer and, in some states, may or may not be subject to another level of hunting restrictions. For example, a landowner does not need a permit to trap a nuisance skunk in [Wisconsin](#), but in [Illinois](#) they

would need to contact the District Wildlife Biologist to see if they qualify for a Nuisance Animal Removal Permit.

Assuming you comply with regulations and have captured a skunk in a live trap, your problems have just begun. In Illinois, you are required to euthanize a trapped skunk as relocation is not permitted; options for doing so are not well defined. Conversely, in Wisconsin, releasing is allowed under certain conditions: a trapped skunk cannot be released on public land and you need written permission from the landowner to release a skunk on private property.

Considering the compliance issues, it often makes far better sense to contact a local [Nuisance Wildlife Control Operator](#) for professional help addressing wildlife problems on the golf course. Perhaps an even better option is to avoid these problems in the first place by mapping and monitoring insect pest populations to determine where an appropriate insecticide can be applied to limit those tasty grubs.

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