

Body Temperature of Skunks

Dear Editor:

Since your publication of serum chemistry values for domestic skunks (Exotic DVM 5[1], 2003), the quality of medicine being practiced across the country has improved, as we can now reference to a population of skunks rather than to dog and cat values.

In our clinical work with domestic skunks, we began to notice that body temperatures obtained in the home were different from those obtained in the clinic. We set up a study to record these values. A random sample of male and female skunks representing various activity levels (calm, resting, active and excited) and housed in different locations in the home was used.

We found that the average skunk rectal body temperature at home was 97°F, while the

average in the clinic was 98°F, or a single degree higher. (No temperatures were taken from skunks in the resting state at the clinic.) None of the skunks had a resting body temperature over 100°, making an important finding that body temperatures of 101-102°F, which were originally thought to be normal, were actually obtained from febrile patients. Results of this study can be accessed at www.skunkhaven.net.

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