

N. AMERICAN PORCUPINE

Erethizon dorsatum

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Fast facts

ANIMAL GROUP	Mammal; rodent
NATIVE REGION	Canada, Alaska, U.S. and northern Mexico
HABITAT	Forests, grasslands, shrublands and tundra
DIET	Herbivore: bark, twigs, leaves
SIZE	25-36 in including tail
WEIGHT	12-35 lb
LIFESPAN	Guide: 5-7 yr wild; wild records to 18
STATUS	Least Concern



Photo: Plumpton Park Zoo

Did you know?

- A North American porcupine has about 30,000 quills.
- Porcupines cannot throw or shoot their quills.
- Only the beaver is a larger North American rodent.
- A baby porcupine is called a porcupette.
- Porcupines are good climbers and good swimmers.

Words to know

Barb: A tiny backward-facing hook on a quill.

Nocturnal: Active mainly at night.

Herbivore: An animal that eats plants.

Porcupette: A young porcupine.

Think about it

1. About how many quills does a porcupine have?
2. Use page evidence to explain how quills and claws help a porcupine survive.
3. What does a porcupine eat in winter?
4. What is a baby porcupine called?
5. How does a mother help her porcupette grow?

Draw it

Draw a porcupine climbing a tree. Label its quills, claws, tail and feet. Explain how one labeled part helps it survive.

Draw here