



NORTH AMERICAN PORCUPINE

Erethizon dorsatum



The porcupine is a large rodent. It has quills, which are modified hairs, on its back and tail that are loosely attached. The porcupine can seriously injure or kill an attacking predator with its quills, which cannot be thrown as believed. Instead, the porcupine backs into its attacker until the loose quills detach. Porcupines eat a variety of vegetation, but they will also eat the antler sheds of deer, elk, and moose.



SPECIES QUICK FACTS

SIZE

An average adult porcupine is between 20 and 26 inches in length.

WEIGHT

The porcupine can average anywhere between 7 and 30 pounds.

FOOD HABITS

The porcupine eats leaves, soft bark, and other forms of vegetation.

HABITAT

The porcupine is typically found in forested areas.

GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION

The porcupine is found throughout the Great Lakes region of the United States and north into Canada. It is also found west of the Rocky Mountains.

FUN FACT

Contrary to what many people believe, porcupines cannot throw their quills.