PORCUPINES

NATURAL HISTORY

Porcupines are North America’s second-largest rodent after the beaver. They are solitary and nocturnal. They climb trees, so heavily wooded areas are a prime habitat, but they may also build nests in rocky areas. Porcupines are very vocal; they grunt, whine, moan, and click their teeth loudly in “battle chatter.” Mating season can feature both sexes screeching at a siren-like pitch. Porcupines are not aggressive with other species, but if threatened they will turn around, spike up their quills, and shake their tail. Their diet changes seasonally. In the winter, they primarily eat evergreen needles and the inner bark of trees, often feeding heavily on a single tree causing damage or death to the tree. In the spring and summer, porcupines shift to eating berries, seeds, grasses, leaves, roots and stems.

Breeding Season & Litter

Porcupines have a low reproductive potential and a long gestation period (remarkably long for a rodent). They may not reproduce every year and if they do, a female gives birth to just a single baby, and they don’t become sexually mature until they are two or three years old.

Tips on avoiding Interactions

Do not feed wildlife! This increases the chances that the animal will lose its natural fear of humans.

Do not leave small pets outside unattended. Porcupine quills can even enter joints, harm internal organs or cause abscesses.

Invest in repellents. To protect plastic tubing and hoses, you can use a capsaicin-based “hot sauce” repellent that is registered for use against porcupines.

Keep your dogs on a leash! Stay alert and keep dogs leashed, or canine curiosity may be rewarded with a painful lesson for them and an expensive vet visit for you.

Call (830) 249-2456 For More Info