

Prickly Porcupines





The North American porcupine is in the rodent family.

It has a small head, high arching back, and chunky, round body.

From its head down to its tail, it can grow up to three feet long.

Because it has special protection, porcupines are not that strong.

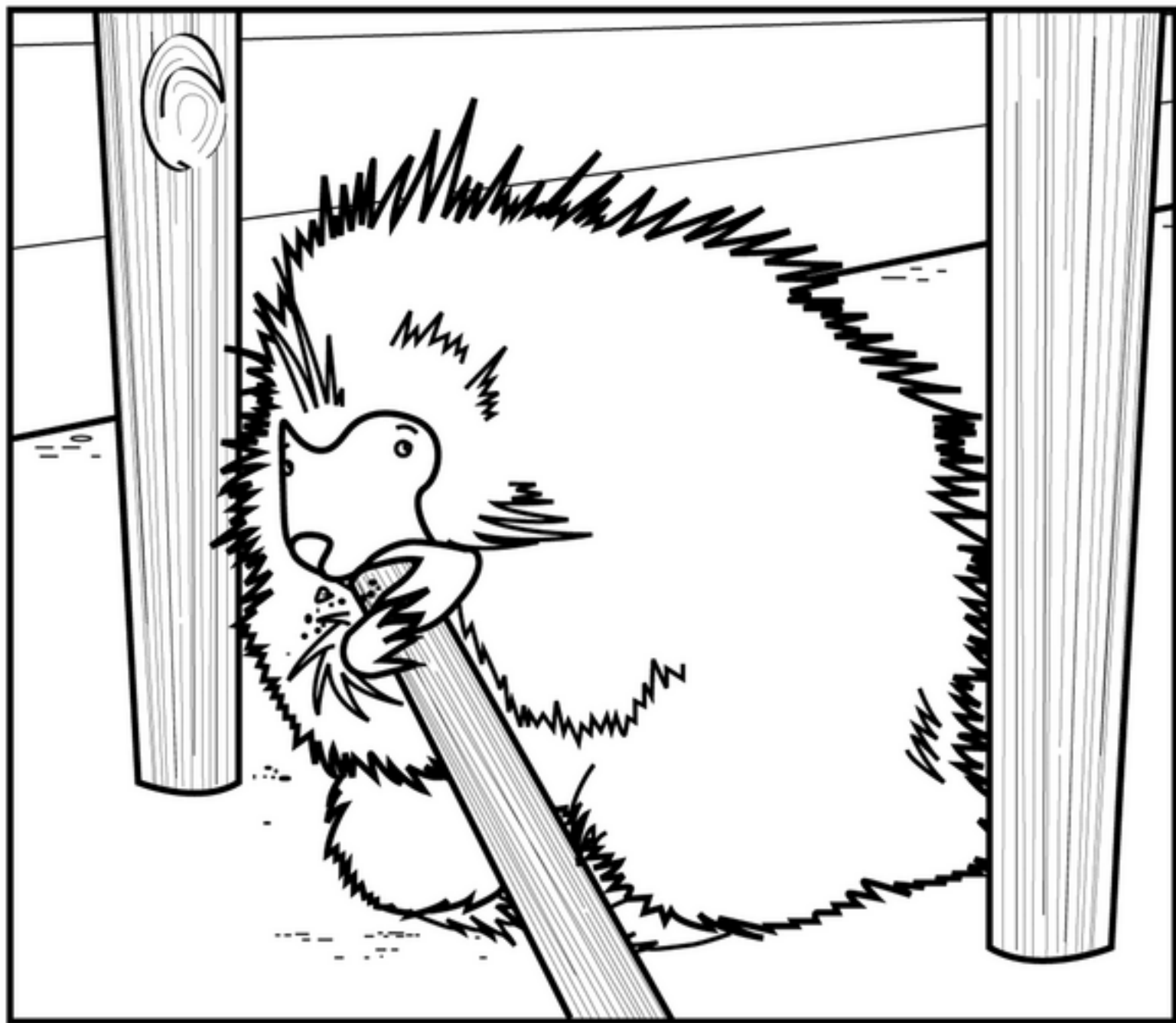


Porcupines are usually brown and gray, and they are very slow.

For eating wood, they've large front teeth that grow, and grow, and grow.

Porcupines are good climbers. They spend a lot of time in trees.

Because of their unique protection, porcupines do as they please.



Porcupines have four clawed-toes on the forefeet and five toes on the hind.

They use them for climbing trees where fresh wood they will find.

Porcupines are vegetarians. They feed on twigs, leaves, and green plants.

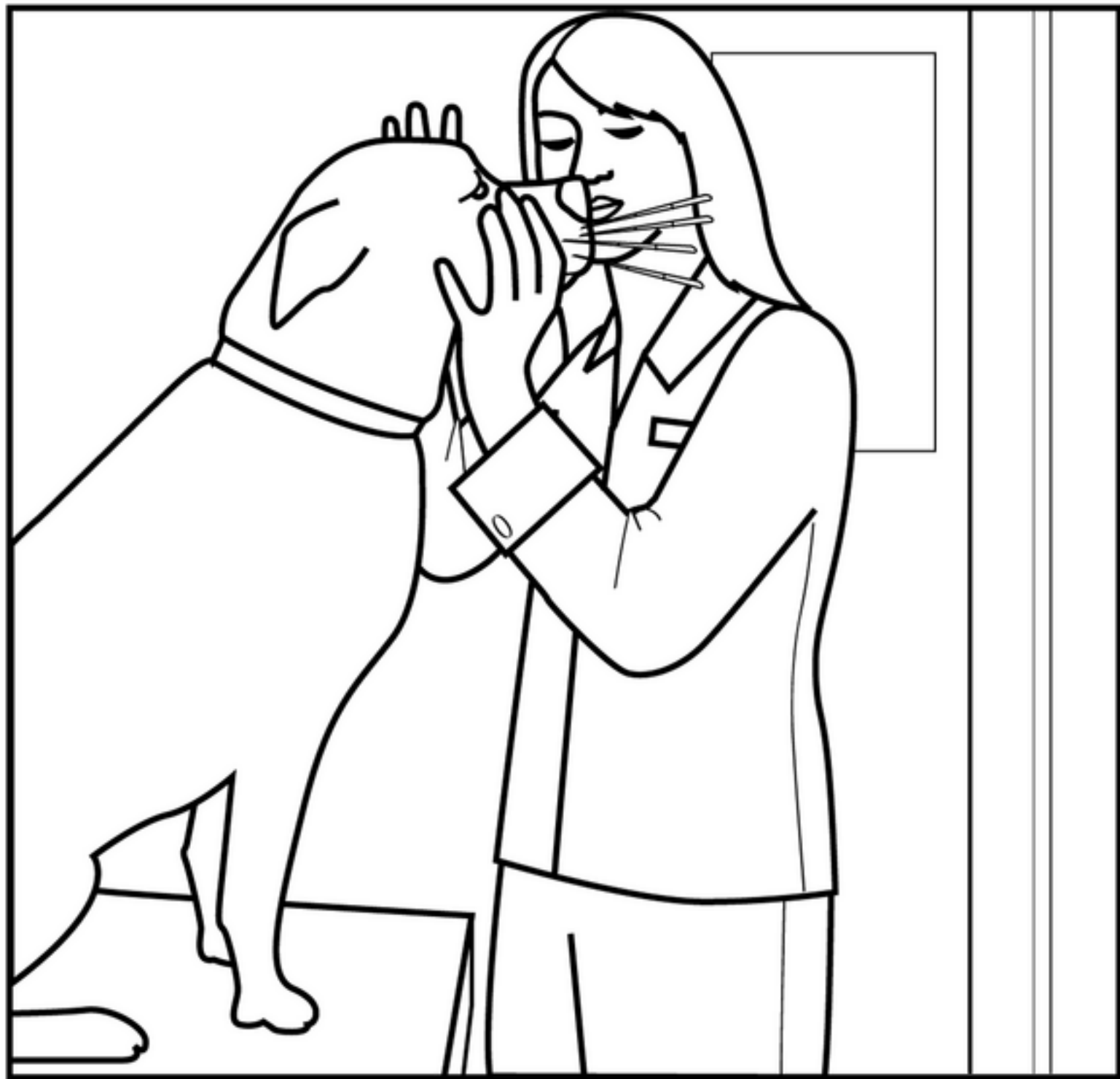
They will gnaw on some man-made items, but porcupines do not eat ants.



Porcupines have soft hairs on their body, but on their
tail and back
they have yellowish quills, or spines, and the tips of
these are black.

Porcupines use their quills, or spines, as their main
defense.

If a quill ever stuck you, the pain could be intense.



These quills are sharp as needles with tiny barbs on the end.

Immediate removal is what veterinarians recommend. Porcupines do not “throw” their quills; they just turn their back, and drive their tail against the enemy to resist attack.



Porcupines are heavy, and can weigh up to forty pounds.

They are very vocal and make all kinds of different sounds.

When porcupines have a baby it is called a porcupette.

The mother protects her baby if she perceives a threat.



Porcupines sleep in the daytime and look for food at night.

They are not aggressive and will never pick a fight.

Porcupines live in woods or woodlands wherever they find food to eat.

Sometimes they're found in scrublands looking for a special treat.



Like most other rodents, porcupines don't seem to be
much good
because they chew up many trees and eat things made
of wood.

But a porcupine must look good to another
porcupine.

So if we just leave them alone, we'll get along just
fine.

1. What kind of animal is a porcupine?

- a. a marsupial
- b. a rodent
- c. a carnivore
- d. a primate

Answer: _____

2. How long can a porcupine get?

- a. up to 12 inches
- b. up to two feet
- c. up to three feet
- d. up to four feet

Answer: _____

3. What do porcupines eat?

- a. rodents
- b. insects
- c. grass
- d. wood, twigs, and leaves

Answer: _____

4. What do porcupines use for defense?

- a. Porcupines have sharp quills.
- b. Porcupines are fast runners.
- c. Porcupines have sharp teeth.
- d. Porcupines are very strong.

Answer: _____

5. What is a porcupette?
- a. a type of ribbon
 - b. a small pinecone
 - c. a baby porcupine
 - d. a baby pig

Answer: _____

6. Where do porcupines live?
- a. in a house
 - b. in the woods
 - c. under the sand
 - d. in an underwater lodge

Answer: _____