

Remember to view wildlife at a respectful distance!

It is important to remember that the wildlife you encounter are wild, unpredictable and potentially dangerous. By getting too close you can unknowingly disturb denning sites which may cause territorial behavior. We ask that you do not approach them too closely, no matter how tame they appear. Remember, if you are close enough to alter their natural behavior... you are too close! Please be respectful and view wildlife from a safe distance.



A species that was once abundant throughout our landscape, the porcupine is becoming harder and harder to find. It would seem that porcupines seem to be disappearing from our high-elevation evergreen forests.

Tribal Wildlife Biologists are looking into the purpose of the population decline, and *need your help!*

We are very interested in determining where porcupines are distributed throughout the reservation. Please keep your eyes open! If you see a porcupine, or sign of a porcupine, please fill out this brochure and mail it in or drop it off at the Tribal Wildlife Management Program.

Contact information is listed on the back, along with the survey.



This brochure will hopefully help you positively identify porcupines.

Credit: painting by Todd Zalewski from Kays and Wilson's *Mammals of North America*, © Princeton University Press (2002)

Thank you for your help and support!

The Tribal Wildlife Management Program's success is positively influenced by public volunteers such as yourself. You can contact us with this vital information by emailing wildlife@cskt.org or mailing this brochure to :

Dale Becker, Program Manager, 883-2888 ext. 7278
or
Kari Smith, Wildlife Biologist, 883-2888 ext. 7217

CSKT Wildlife Management Program
P.O. Box 278
Pablo, MT 59855



Please fill out the information below to the best of your knowledge.

Your name (optional) _____

Phone number (optional) _____

Location of sighting (Closest landmark)

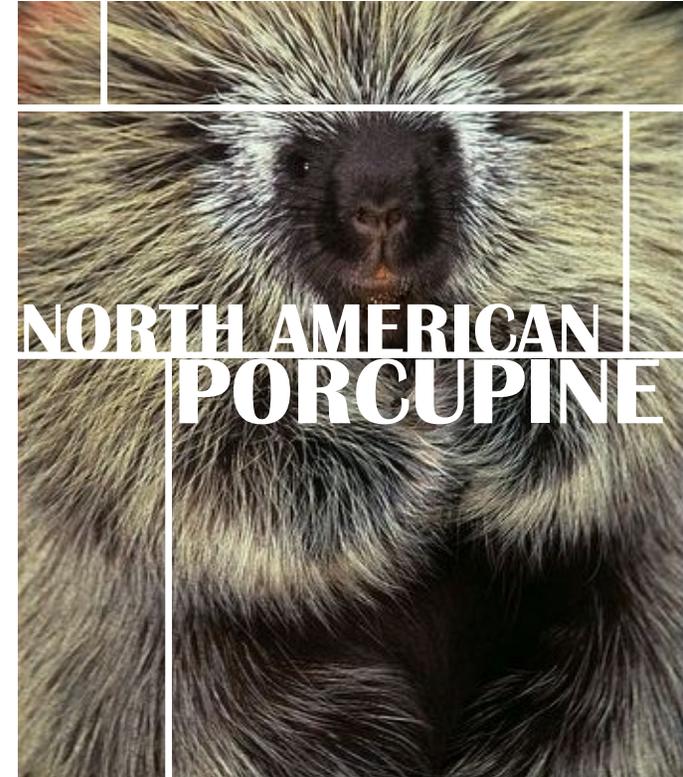
GPS coordinates? _____

Approx. date of sighting _____

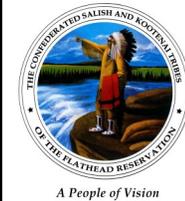
Habitat type _____

Description of sighting _____

Any additional information _____



Please take this informational brochure to learn more about our North American porcupine.



DIVISION OF FISH, WILDLIFE, RECREATION & CONSERVATION

The Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes Wildlife Management Program is calling on the public for information regarding porcupine sightings on the Flathead Indian Reservation and surrounding areas.

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NORTH AMERICAN PORCUPINE

Erethizon dorsatum
Family Erethizontidae

Erethizon dorsatum, the porcupine, is the second largest rodent in North America. It is equipped with yellowish- white quills tipped in black or brown covering its back. A single porcupine may have up to 30,000 quills! Before beads and ribbons were introduced by non-Indian traders, local Salish and Pend d'Oreille people decorated many of their clothes with porcupine quills dyed with berries. In Salish, the porcupine is pronounced *skw1* and in Kootenai *niłksaq*



Their lifespan ranges from 5—7 years, weighing in at 12 to 35 pounds on average.

North American porcupines are very good climbers and spend much of their time in the trees.

HABITAT PREFERENCE AND DIET

Typical porcupine habitat consists of mixed deciduous and coniferous trees, preferring areas with brushy understory for protective cover. They are nocturnal creatures, foraging mostly at night. During most of the year porcupines are solitary animals, but will occasionally bunch up in winter. They are herbivores, eating a diet of mainly plants. In summer they will eat woody roots, stems, leaves, grass, seeds, and flowers.



REPRODUCTION

Porcupines breed in the autumn. Females reach breeding age at one and a half years, while a male must be four years old to reach sexual maturity. With a gestation length of 205-217 days, a soft-quilled porcupette is born in April—June. This creates an extremely low reproductive rate in porcupines, which may be a contributing factor of their population decline. The young are capable of climbing trees within a few hours of birth.

SIGN OF PORCUPINE PRESENCE



Porcupines feed on woody plants and trees, leaving de-barked branches. Sometimes confused with beaver, porcupines only chew as deep as the cambium layer in the bark. You may also find piles of nipped twigs and needles beneath deciduous trees in the winter.

Scat and Tracks

Porcupine scat is released in discrete pellets. Sometimes resembling deer scat. Porcupine pellets, however, are curved, and almost cashew nut like in size and shape.



Porcupines use the same feeding trees repeatedly, so it's easy to find their trail marks in mud or snow. Look for the tail drag marks.

