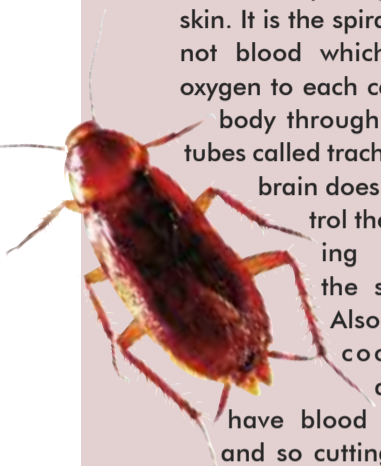


FAUNA FACTS

How can a cockroach survive without its head?

Cockroaches breathe through spiracles which are small openings on the skin. It is the spiracles and not blood which carries oxygen to each cell of the body through a set of tubes called tracheae. The brain does not control the breathing through the spiracles. Also, the cockroach does not have blood pressure and so cutting off the head does not lead to uncontrolled bleeding. Thirdly, the cockroach needs much less food and a one day meal would be enough for it to last for a whole month as long as it is not extremely active. So a cool temperature could allow the cockroach to last about a month without need for its head, as long as they are not infected with a mould, bacteria or virus, which could kill them.



How can an ant carry heavy weight?

The tiny ant, which may be as small as 1/16 of an inch or as long as 2 inches can carry up to 50 times its own weight. What is probably most surprising about this is the fact that the ant does not have any bones, only a horny skin to serve as a protective covering. But it does have very powerful jaws which it uses to cut and carry leaves, flowers, seeds, twigs, wood, dirt, cocoons, and even parts of larger animals, including crocodiles and lions.



Despite slamming their head, why does the head of the woodpecker not damage?



Woodpeckers slam their heads into wood at a rate of 20 pecks per second but there is no injury as the woodpecker's skull is specially designed to withstand repeated blows. The bones of a

woodpecker skull are thicker than in other birds. Also the bones between the beak and the skull are joined by a cartilage which acts as a shock absorber and cushions each blow before it reaches the brain.

Why does the kangaroo carry its young one in its pouch?

Female kangaroos have a pouch in which they keep their young for eight to nine months after they are born. The baby kangaroo called joey stays inside the mother's body for just one month and so they are born in a very undeveloped state. They complete developing inside the pouch which gives the little kangaroo its milk, shelter, and even oil to keep it moist. The joey spends its first five months in the pouch completely. At the end of this time, the joey pokes its head out, but does not venture out. Finally at eight months, the joey leaves the pouch for good, returning to its mother only to drink her milk.



Prickly Porcupines

ANIMAL KINGDOM

What are porcupines?

Porcupines are rodents with a coat of sharp spines, or quills that defend them from predators. They are the third largest of the rodents, behind the capybara and the beaver. Porcupines have a relatively long life and until recently held the record for being the longest living rodent, recently broken by the Naked Mole Rat.

What are its physical characteristics?

Most porcupines are about 25–36 inches long, with an 8–10 inches long tail. Weighing between 5.4–16 kg, they are rounded, large and slow. They come in various shades of brown, grey, and the unusual white.

What is unique about the porcupine's spines?

Porcupines' quills or spines take on various forms, depending on the species. A single animal may have 30,000 or more quills. Quills are released by contact with them, or they

may drop out when the porcupine shakes its body. New quills grow to replace lost ones.

What do porcupines eat?

Salt licks placed nearby can prevent porcupines from injuring themselves. So, porcupines in search of salt sometimes encroach on human habitats, eating plywood cured with sodium nitrate, certain paints, and tool handles, footwear, clothes and other items that have been coated in salty sweat. Some porcupines also have a healthy appetite for wood. They also eat natural bark and stems, fruit, leaves, and springtime buds.

What is their habitat?

Porcupines live in forests, deserts, rocky outcrops, hillsides and grasslands.

Porcupines occupy a wide range of habitats in tropical and temperate parts of Asia, Italy, Africa, and North and South America.

