



# African Cape Porcupine

*Hystrix africaeaustralis*



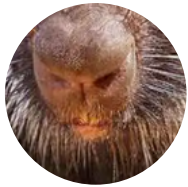
## Bristle and Nettle

We are the **father** and **son pair** in the **Vanishing Kingdom**. Nettle was born on **December 3, 2021**, and Bristle was born **October 6, 2019**

We are **timid** and **shy**; however, if it is quiet enough, we come out of our shells and become **curious** and **witty**.

Our favorite activity is **chewing** on sticks, **eating "veggie burritos"** (food wrapped in newspaper), and **playing** with other puzzle feeders.

## PORCUPINES AT A GLANCE



- We have a **pair of incisors** that **continuously grow**.
- In the wild, we eat **fruits, roots, tubers, bulbs, and bark**. On occasion we will **gnaw on carrion and bones** to help maintain our teeth.
- At the zoo, we like to eat **fruits and vegetables**.



- We have **long claws** that we use to **dig and forage**.
- We are **terrestrial** and spend most of our time on the ground.
- We **dig** and **burrow in holes** where we like to rest and sleep.



- Our bodies are covered in **long quills**, starting about a third of the way down the body.
- The quills are **barbed** and **sharp** to defend against predators.
- Quills are made out of **keratin**, the same substance fingernails and hair are made of.

Adult size:  
25-32 inches long  
22-53 pounds

Long quills up to 20 inches in length



Sharp claws that are good for burrowing

Avg. life expectancy in native habitats:  
12-15 years

Avg. life expectancy in human care:  
up to 20 years

## WHERE ARE NATIVE CAPE PORCUPINE HABITATS LOCATED?



Their habitat range is from Central to Southern Africa. They prefer open areas where vegetation is available. If they want to find some place to rest or hide, they prefer rocky crevices and caves for shelter.

# Cape Porcupine Behavior

## SHAKING QUILLS

When we feel threatened, we will lift up our quills and shake them to make noise. This is our warning to predators to stay away.

We don't feel safe about our surroundings. Please give us space!



## LOSING QUILLS

Just like humans lose hairs, we lose and drop our quills from time to time. It is a myth that we can shoot out our quills.

If you see our quills fall out, it is completely natural. We will have new quills grow.



## WRESTLING

Unlike some porcupines, we usually live in a pair or small family. We are really social animals and like to play with each other.

We play with each other by charging or wrestling. We can be pretty rough with each other!



## DAYDREAMER

We are naturally nocturnal, so we tend to be active during the evening hours and sleepy during the day.

We may be sleeping out of sight. Come back in the beginning of the day or towards the end of the day to see us!

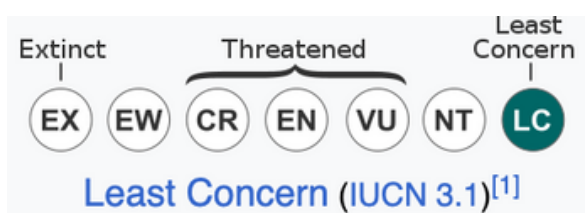


- As a last resort, porcupines will turn around and **charge** with their **back side, covered in quills**, towards the danger.
- They are monogamous and live in small groups comprised of an adult pair or an adult with their offspring. Family groups often develop extensive inter-connected burrow systems. They will huddle together for warmth.

# Cape Porcupine Conservation

Cape porcupines are ecosystem engineers. Using their claws, they will open up soil while digging and foraging; this allows water to enter the ground and help new plants grow.

They are listed as **Least Concern**. However, human expansion is leading to overall habitat loss and fragmentation. People will consider them as pests to their crops and will attack or hunt them.



## How can we help?

Even though pests can make life difficult, we can deal with them in humane or non-lethal ways. We can reduce the chances for pests by being clean with our food waste and storing items properly. We can use traps to capture them and release elsewhere.

Leaving food waste in the wild can attract animals. If this food waste ends up near roadways, it has the potential to harm our native wildlife. Hold onto your trash or food until you can dispose it in a trashcan.