

# Literacy This Week



Yukon Literacy  
Coalition

*We are a society of people dedicated to improving the quality of life of all Yukoners. We do this by building the foundational skills required for lifelong learning; acknowledging that we are all adapting to an everchanging world.*

## Prickly Pals

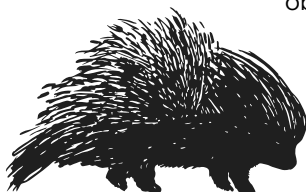
With summer starting to finally show signs of setting in, you may notice a few more critters hanging around the shoulders of the roadway looking for the first few blades of greenery to scarf back after a lean winter. Among them is the often-criticized North American Porcupine.

These small herbivores make their way out of the forest looking for love and food. May and early June are prime mating season months for these spikey members of the Hystricidae family, so the males crowd the open ditches along all Yukon highways searching for suitable partners. Once they have located a mate, they do their part in building the population of their species and then make their way to the nearest dandelion patch to chow down on some much-needed nourishment.

Although they look calm and content, porcupines are often on guard for predators, so it's best to keep your viewing distance.

A common belief is that they will throw their quills in response to threats, but this is not true! They can only eject their quills once they have been attached to a potential threat. The quills themselves are slightly barbed at the tips and once these barbs attach to the attacker, the quills are pulled from the porcupine - which can cause the porcupine discomfort. So, like a bumblebee, a porcupine only lashes out as a last resort of protection. Some of these potential predators include bears, coyotes, eagles, and some larger hawks.

I encourage you to go out and safely observe these wonderful little creatures - but remember to keep a good distance for both them and you.



### Yukon Literacy Coalition

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