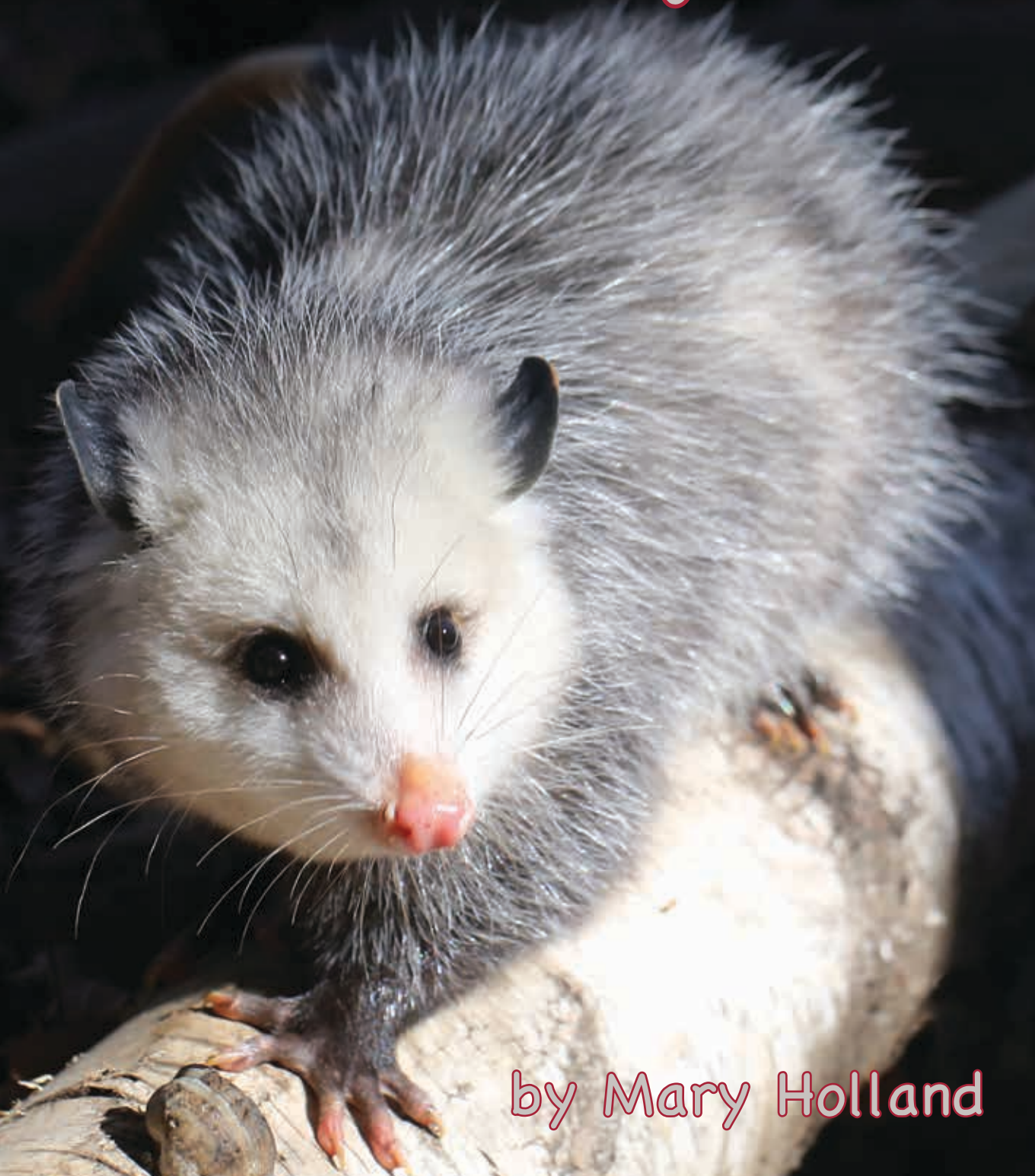


Animal Myths



by Mary Holland

Animal Myths

Sometimes stories are told so often that people begin believing them even though they are not true. If enough people believe these untrue stories, they are called myths. Do you know what's true or not? Do porcupines really throw their quills? Can someone be as blind as a bat? Are snakes slimy or do opossums hang by their tails? And just how much wood can a woodchuck chuck? Learn what's true and what's not in the latest addition to Mary Holland's Animal Anatomy and Adaptation series.

Arbordale Publishing offers so much more than a picture book. We open the door for children to explore the facts behind a story they love.

Animals in this book include: Cover-Virginia opossum, Title Page-milk snake, porcupine, striped skunk, bat, American toad, calico pennant dragonfly, woodchuck, chipping sparrow nestlings, Dekay's brownsnake, snapping turtle, barn owl, black bears, Virginia opossum, tri-colored bumble bee, and human.

The *For Creative Minds* includes

- Spiders Are Not Insects
- Match the Animals To Their Defenses

Thanks to the staff and volunteers at Cedar Bog Nature Preserve for verifying the information in this book.

Arbordale's interactive ebooks read aloud in both English and Spanish with word-highlighting and adjustable audio speed. Available for purchase online.

Mary Holland is a naturalist, nature photographer, columnist, and award-winning author with a life-long passion for natural history. After graduating from the University of Michigan's School of Natural Resources, Mary worked as a naturalist at the Museum of the Hudson Highlands in New York state, directed the state-wide Environmental Learning for the Future program for the Vermont Institute of Natural Science, worked as a resource naturalist for the Massachusetts Audubon Society, and designed and presented her own "Knee-High Nature Programs" for libraries and elementary schools throughout Vermont and New Hampshire.

Her other children's books with Arbordale include *Animal Homes*, *Animal Tracks and Traces*, *Otis the Owl*, *Ferdinand Fox's First Summer* (NSTA / CBC Most Outstanding Science Trade Book and Moonbeam Children's Book Award), *The Beavers' Busy Year*, *Yodel the Yearling*, *Animal Ears*, *Animal Skins*, *Animal Noses*, *Animal Tails*, *Animal Eyes*, *Animal Legs*, and *Animal Mouths* (NSTA / CBC Most Outstanding Science Trade Book). Mary's book *Naturally Curious: a Photographic Field Guide and Month-by-Month Journey Through the Fields, Woods and Marshes of New England* won the 2011 National Outdoor Book Award for the Nature Guidebook category. *Naturally Curious Day by Day* was published in 2016. Mary lives in Vermont with her lab, Greta. Visit Mary's blog at naturallycuriouswithmaryholland.wordpress.com.



Mary Holland

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Myth: Porcupines Shoot Their Quills

Porcupines can't run very fast. The only protection they have are special hairs called quills.

Quills are hollow. The tips are sharp and covered with tiny hooks. If they are scared, porcupines tuck in their head, stick out their quills, and look like a big pin cushion.

You may have heard that porcupines can shoot their quills. This is not true. But if an animal touches a porcupine, the quills will become stuck in the animal's skin.





Myth: Skunks Spray Right Away When Scared

Lots of people are scared of striped skunks because they worry skunks will spray them. Skunks only spray if they are very frightened.

Even then they give lots of warning. The first thing they do if they are scared is hiss and raise their tail up and over their back. Next, they stamp their front feet on the ground. If you don't go away, they will turn their body in a U-shape so that both their head and their bottom are facing you. If you keep coming closer, you may get sprayed!

Don't try holding a skunk by its tail—it can still spray you!

Myth: Blind as a Bat

Bats are not blind! They have eyes and can see very well. However, to find insects to eat, they depend on their ears more than their eyes.

Bats make a high-pitched sound which bounces off insects and back to the bat. That tells the bat exactly where the insects are, even if it's pitch black. This way of finding something is called echolocation.





Myth: Touching a Toad Gives You Warts

Holding a toad in your hands will not make you sick or give you warts!

Toads are covered with bumps. Inside some of these bumps, or glands, is a poisonous liquid that would make you sick if you ate the toad.

Toads use the poison to protect themselves from snakes and other animals that might want to eat them (predators). If a dog picks up a toad in its mouth, the dog will start foaming at the mouth and will drop the toad right away.

While you won't get warts if you hold a toad, it might pee on you!



Myth: Dragonflies Sew Mouths Shut or Sting

Dragonflies can fly but they are not dragons!

Because dragonflies are long and thin and look a bit like a sewing needle, people used to believe that they could sew your mouth, ears, or lips shut while you were sleeping. And some people think dragonflies sting.

Dragonflies cannot sew or sting and will not harm you. The only creatures that need to be scared of dragonflies are the insects they eat.

For Creative Minds

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Spiders Are Not Insects

Some people think spiders are insects, but they are not. Insects have six legs and three body parts. Spiders have eight legs and two body parts.

Can you tell which is an insect and which is a spider?

1



2



3



4



Answers: Insects: 2, 3 Spiders: 1, 4

Match the Animals to Their Defenses

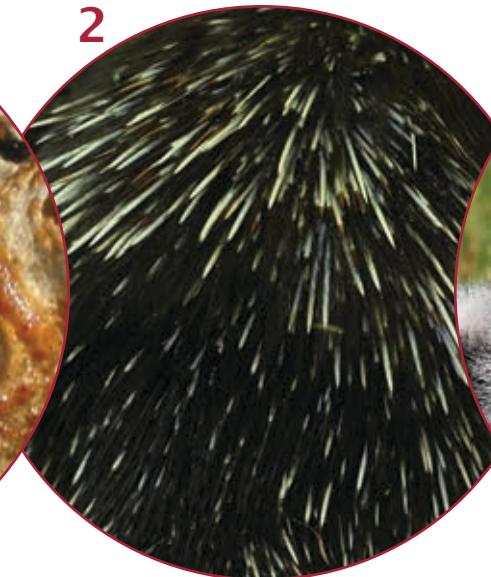
All animals have adaptations to help them defend themselves. Can you match the animal to its defenses?

1



poison gland

2



quills

3



spray

porcupine



skunk

toad



Answers: 1-toad, 2-porcupine, 3-striped skunk

This book is dedicated to Pat Henderson, whose encouragement and unmitigated faith in me helped launch my writing career.—MH

Thanks to Sadie Brown for the use of her photo of her daughter, Lily Piper, making a funny face.

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