

Key: D Major
♩ = 90

The Possum's Tail is Bare

From fiddler Melvin Wine
Arr. Pete Showman

1. Well the squir-rel's got a bush-y tail, stum-py is the bear's; The
rab-bit's got no tail at all, just a lit-tle bunch of hair(s). Oh, the
Pos-sum's tail is bare, the pos-sum's tail is bare. The
Rac-coon's tail is ringed all a-round but the pos-sum's tail is bare (to repeat)

Typeset in ABC by Pete Showman 7/2015 (rev. 3: 7/30/15), based on several recordings and transcriptions, including transcriptions from David Barton and Mark Wardenburg. The melody shown here is a fairly simple version to fit the lyrics.

West Virginia fiddler Melvin Wine is generally credited as the source; he can be heard in a 1994 recording at cdm272901.cdmhost.com/cdm/ref/collection/p15131coll4/id/741. There's what seems to be a pretty complete transcription of Wine's playing at drfiddle.com/show_tune.php?id=426.

I've shown the verse as being sung during the A part repeat, followed immediately by the chorus on the first B part. But do as you like. There are many variations on the lyrics on the Web; this is the combination I like best, but here are some others:

From Melvin Wine's 1994 recording:

1. Well the squirrel he's got a bushy tail, puffy grows the hair;
The old coon's tail is ringed all around but the possum's tail is bare.
The possum's tail is bare, oh the possum's tail is bare.
Old coon's tail is ringed all around but the possum's tail is bare.
2. Take an old possum by the tail, then we skin him on a rail,
Never ever more will he be there, grinning at the moon.
Just grinning at the moon, just grinning at the moon;
Never ever more will he be there, grinning at the moon.

Another add-on verse, also found for Bile 'Em Cabbage Down:

2. Oh the possum's up a 'simmon [or apple] tree, the raccoon's on the ground.
Raccoon says to Possum "Won't you knock some 'simmons [apples] down?"
Oh, the possum's tail is bare,