



Hedgehog

Description:

This particular hedgehog and called a Four-toed hedgehog. The Four-toed hedgehog only has 4 toes on each hind foot. The hedgehog has a very distinctive prickly spiny coat and long coarse hair on its face and underparts. An adult hedgehog can grow between 14 to 30 centimeters long. Females are larger than males.

Habitat:

The four-toed hedgehog is found across central Africa. They prefer grassy environments or open woodland with elevations as high a 6,600 ft. Their main predators are Verreaux's eagles, owls, jackals, hyenas and honey badgers. They prefer temperatures in the mid 80's F. When the hot dry season occurs and food is scarce they will go into a state of aestivation - inactivity and lowered metabolic rate and when the temperature gets colder it will go into a state of hibernation.

Adaptations:

The four-toed hedgehog is a solitary, nocturnal animal normally found along the ground. They have a high tolerance for toxins and have been known to eat scorpions and venomous snakes. When attacked by a predator, it can scream loudly.

Diet:

Insects, spiders, grubs, snails, plant matter and small vertebrates

Class: Mammalia

Order: Eulipotyphla

Family: Erinaceidae

Genus & Species: Erinaceus

Life Span: up to 3 years in wild and up to 10 in captivity

Fun Facts:

Hedghogs rarely lose their quills during adulthood.

Hedgehogs sleep in rolled up in a ball to protect themselves.

They have a special circular muscle that runs along the sides of its body and across its neck and bottom. When this muscle contracts it creates a pouch for the hedgehog to put its head, body and legs as it curls up.

Breeding:

The female gives birth to a single litter each year. She can have one to 10 pups in a litter.

The mother creates a nesting cavity in old abandoned rodent burrows. They give birth after 40 days. When born the spines are already present. The young are weaned by six weeks and leave the mother not long after.

Range:

Central and Eastern Africa



Conservation:

There are no majoyr threats to four-toed hedgehogs in the wild.