

Four-toed African Hedgehog

Scientific Name: *Atelerix albiventris*

Class: Mammalia

Order: Insectivora

Family: Erinaceidae



Their length is 6.75 to 9.25 inches with a tail length up to 2 inches, and they weigh 0.5 to 1.5 pounds. Upper parts, except for the front of the head and ears, are covered with short spines. Spines are white at the base and at the tips and have a central band that is dark brown or black. The face, limbs, and tail are covered with dark brown or grayish brown hair, and the underparts vary in color from white to black. Females have three pairs of mammae.

Range

From Senegal to Sudan and Zambia

Habitat

Their habitat includes grassland, scrub, savannah, and suburban gardens

Gestation

Approximately 35 days

Litter

1-10. Usually 4-5

Behavior

These hedgehogs are primarily nocturnal and solitary. During the day they'll rest, curled into a ball, under matted grass or in leaf litter, a rocky crevice or a hole in the ground. They move daily unless caring for a litter or during hibernation. They eat well and gain weight during the warm and rainy season, going into hibernation during an approximately six-week period during June to September. If the weather warms, they may wake and seek food. They are generally slow moving but can move fairly fast if necessary. If two individuals meet, they will growl, snort and butt heads. Their main defense is to roll into a ball with the head, limbs, and underparts protected by the sharp spines of the upper parts.

Reproduction

Sexual maturity is attained at 61-68 days and females may have several litters per year. Babies weigh about 10 grams at birth and open their eyes at about 14 days. They are weaned and begin to follow the mother at around 6 weeks.

Wild Diet

They feed primarily on invertebrates such as spiders and insects, occasionally also consuming small amounts of plant matter or small vertebrates.