

Hedgehogs Erinaceidae

Hedgehogs are distinct mammals with unmistakable spiny dorsal coats. They have the ability to roll into a defensive ball when threatened and have the capacity to go into extended torpor, allowing hibernation (during northern winters) and aestivating during tropical droughts. In the Horn of Africa hedgehogs are essentially lowland species.

The habits of the hedgehogs of the Horn of Africa are poorly known and records of the species few and far between.

Two, possibly three, hedgehogs occur in the Horn of Africa.

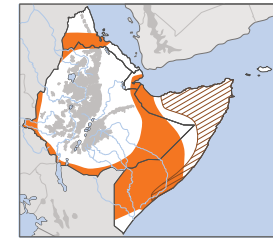
Note: The taxonomic status of the Somali hedgehog *Atelerix sclateri* is uncertain and may be a race of *Atelerix albiventris* (Hutterer 2005). Its distribution is mapped but it is not described.

Note: Some authorities designate *Paraechinus aethiopicus* as *Hemiechinus aethiopicus*.

Hedgehogs Erinaceidae, two (possibly three) species, 44



Four-toed hedgehog, Yabelo, Ethiopia, RG



Four-toed hedgehog
Atelerix albiventris
Wagner, 1841

Distribution: Sub-Saharan and E African species, present in all countries of the HoA.

IUCN status: LC.

Typical locality: Yabelo in Ethiopia.

Other name: White-bellied hedgehog.

Size: Up to 500 g, HB up to 20 cm.

Description: Short banded spines cover the uppersides and coarse white hairs cover the belly and and some of the face. Its muzzle and mask are dark and ears short.

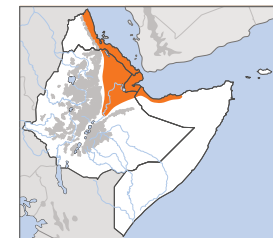
Habitat: Open grasslands and semi-desert, 0 to 1,500 m.

Similar species: Somali hedgehog (mapped above but not described). Desert hedgehog (p. 44) *is larger with longer ears that are approximately twice the spine length.*

Behaviour: Its foods are mainly beetles, snails and millipedes. Mainly crepuscular and nocturnal its habits in the HoA are poorly known. Their call is a sniff-like sound.



Desert hedgehog, APA



Desert hedgehog
Paraechinus aethiopicus
Ehrenberg, 1832

Distribution: N Africa, Sudan and Arabia. Records from all countries of the HoA.

IUCN status: LC.

Typical localities: Few records but it has been seen in the Awash NP in Ethiopia.

Other name: Long-eared hedgehog.

Size: Up to 700 g, HB up to 23 cm.

Description: Similar to the four-toed hedgehog. It has short spines and an ill defined mask. Its legs are dark and its ears are about twice the length of its spines.

Habitat: Desert and semi-desert, 0 to 1,000 m.

Similar species: Four-toed hedgehog (p. 44) *is larger with a well defined mask, longer spines and distinctly shorter ears, i.e. only just exceeding the spine length.*

Behaviour: It is insectivorous and can excavate its own burrow for sleeping. It is little seen being crepuscular and nocturnal and its habits in the HoA are poorly known.