
African Pygmy Hedgehog

Ateleric albivensis

Class: *Mammalia*

Order: *Erinaceomorpha*

Family: *Erinaceidae*

Characteristics: Length: 6-8 inches; Wt: 18-25 ounces. Females larger than males. Long, pointed pinkish-brown snouts, dark noses; round, dark eyes; oval brownish ears; short, white hair on brows, cheeks, and bellies and ½-1 inch long, un-barbed spines on back and sides. Reasonably good eyesight with some degree of color vision but depend more on excellent hearing and sense of smell that can detect prey 2 inches or more below ground.

Behavior: Solitary and territorial. Forages at night. Returns to burrow during day. Aestivates (becomes dormant) and lives off stored fat during dry season when insects are scarce. Shelters in logs, roots, brush piles, burrows, termite mounds. If endangered, rolls into a ball, tenses muscles and draws spiny coat together with head, belly and feet tucked inside. Chirps, chuffs, hisses and growls. Screams if hurt or frightened. Self-anoints by spreading foamy saliva over spines. Like porcupines, they jab their spines into predators as a defense mechanism. Unlike porcupines, hedgehogs will retain their quills.

Reproduction: Females ovulate during the rainy season when food is abundant. Male courts by running around female in circles, twittering, growling, and snorting. After 30-40 days gestation and after hibernation, 3-4 blind young are born weighing about 0.35oz. Spines are soft & white at birth hardening after a few days. Eyes open in 8-18 days; rolls up at 2 weeks; stops nursing at 40-45 days. Sexually mature at 60 days and will leave mom and siblings shortly after.

Diet:

Wild: worms, snails, arthropods, frogs, lizards, snakes, eggs, nestling birds, small mammals, carrion, fruits, seeds, peanuts, fungi, roots.

Zoo: Ferret Food and wax worms.

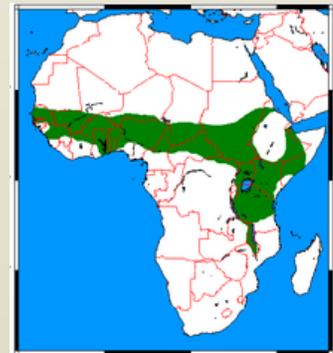
Conservation: Not currently protected although low reproduction and pet trade are major threats. Due to their popularity as pets, collecting them from the wild is no longer allowed. Due to their extensive range and stable wild population, the species holds no particular conservation status. Predators: Verreaux eagle, owls, honey badgers, jackals, wild dogs.

FYI: AKA Four-toed hedgehogs with 4 toes on back feet, 5 on front.



Range & Habitat:

Eastern and Central Africa in rocky hillsides or outcrops in arid scrub and savanna.



Lifespan: up to 10 years in captivity, 3 years in the wild.

Special Adaptations: standard defensive reaction is to tense up all the muscles on its back to cause its spines to stand erect, and then roll into a ball protecting its limbs and head Info.

IUCN Conservation Status:

Not Evaluated

