

Hedgehog



1. Habitat

There are a wide variety of hedgehogs. They are found in parts of Europe, Asia, Africa and New Zealand. They are not native to the Americas.

2. Growth & Reproduction

The average litter is 3-4 newborns. Larger species of hedgehog live 4 -7 years in the wild. Smaller hedgehogs live 2-4 years.

3. Protection from Predators

A hedgehog defends itself by rolling up into a tight ball, causing all of its spines to stick out, shielding them from their predators. They also make loud huffing and popping noises, to scare them away.

Occasionally hedgehogs perform a ritual called 'anointing'. When they come across a new scent, they lick and bite the source. They then form a scented froth in their mouths and paste it all on their spines using the tongue. This camouflages the hedgehog with the new scent of the area and provides a poison or source of infection to any predator that aets poked by their spines.

4. Feeding Relationships

Hedgehogs feed on snails, worms and insects. They are often welcome as a natural form of pest control. Some people leave food out to attract hedgehogs to their gardens. Birds (especially owls and ferrets) feed on hedgehogs. Depending on the species, it can take a hedgehog 40 -58 days to digest food.