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Amazing Animals
Fact sheets

Echidnas

Echidnas have slender snouts and long, flicking tongues. They also has distinctive sharp spines (quills) along their back and sides for protection against predators. When threatened, the echidna will curl inwards, leaving only their sharp spines exposed.

Short-beaked Echidna

The Echidna has a slender snout and long, flicking tongue, ideal for catching insects. The Echidna also has distinctive sharp spines (quills) along its back and sides for protection against predators. When threatened, the Echidna will curl inwards, leaving only their sharp spines exposed.

Habitat

Found throughout Australia, the Echidna is a highly adaptable creature and can be found in coastal forests, alpine meadows and interior deserts. The Echidna has the widest distribution of any native Australian mammal.

Diet

Echidnas have no teeth! They live on a very specific diet of termites, ants and other soil invertebrates, especially beetle larvae. They have very strong claws in which to break open rotting logs to collect termites.

Breeding

The Echidna's breeding season occurs between July and August. After mating the male and female go their separate ways. Four weeks later the female lays a single egg into a simple pouch on her abdomen. Ten days later the baby Echidna hatches and starts to lap up milk from its mother. Baby Echidnas start life without hair or quills but will eventually grow these. When the young is too prickly to carry, the mother will dig a burrow for it. The young is weaned at about 7 months of age.

Australia Zoo Short-beaked Echidna profiles

Prickle

Prickle is a very special little echidna. Every week the Australia Zoo Wildlife Hospital receives hundreds of animal rescue calls, and this is how Prickle came to live with us at Australia Zoo.
Prickle was diagnosed with Chlamydia, which left him with permanent eye damage and unable to be released back to the wild.
Prickle loves his home at Australia Zoo and all the other echidnas that he lives with!

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