

African Pygmy Hedgehog

Atelerix albiventris

Judith Bos

&

Lindy de Vries

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Coverphoto Judith Bos

Coverdesign Judith Bos

Photo's inside Judith Bos
Wade Lambert
Fabrizio Frigeni
IUCN Red List
Hedgehogs of Asgard
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ISBN 9789402195729

NUR 413

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Introduction

This book is written by Judith Bos in collaboration with Liny de Vries. The book is based on references as much as possible and published in Dutch and English with the purposes of widespread education.

We are proud of the made collaboration with authors of scientific researches and relyable sources of information. This gives us a great possibility to make information on these exotic mammals available in countries where this is not accesable yet. For this we, as authors, want to express our gratitude.

Ofcourse we would like to introduce ourselves to you as authors of this book.



Judith Bos

Owner of The Hedgehog Program.

Judith was born in Hattem, a small city in The Netherlands and grew up alongside the Northern tip of the Veluwe. There she has developed her interest in animals and nature and this is still a passion she loves to express every day.

In 2011 she took in her first African Pygmy Hedgehog and not much later she began to shelter African Pygmy Hedgehogs that were neglected and/or sick. In 2014 she plans to start a good hobby breeding that focuses on research and education, became reality.

Until this day, she has maintained this hobby, with her studies under the name of The Hedgehog Program. This project over time, has become a worldwide informative platform.



Lindy de Vries

Hobby breeder at Hedgery Dèvi.

Lindy was born in Zwolle in The Netherlands. Since childhood, Lindy has always been busy with animals. At the age of 12 she first encountered hedgehog species that could be held as pets and from that moment on she has been collecting information.

In 2013 she took in her first African Pygmy Hedgehog she took her first hail and the hobby grew fast after that. In 2014 she started her hedgery which focuses primarily on breeding healthy lines. Today she belongs to the team of The Hedgehog Program and is still busy with her hobby.





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1 Taxonomy & propagation

Taxonomy

Kingdom	Animalia	Animals
Phylum	Chordata	Chordates
Class	Mammalia	Mammals
Order	Eulipotyphla	Insect eaters
Family	Erinaceidae	Hedgehogs

Scientific name	Atelerix albiventris
Species published by	(Wagner, 1841)

Other names	English	Four-toed Hedgehog
	English	African Pygmy Hedgehog
	Dutch	Witbuikegel
	Dutch	Afrikaanse Witbuikegel
	German	Weißbauchigel
	German	Afrikanischer Weißbauchigel

1.1 Natural propagation

Atelerix albiventris naturally occurs in West, Central and Eastern Africa. The area they occur in, the Sahel, goes from Senegal and South Mauritania in the West through parts of the Sahara desert towards Sudan, Eritrea and Ethiopia.

The Sahel stops there, but the habitat of the African Pygmy Hedgehog goes through over Eastern Africa towards the most Southern part of Zambia.

Despite the Sahel going partially through the Saharan desert, the habitat of the African Pygmy Hedgehog lies a bit more southern.

They mainly live in the halfdesert and areas of trees, bushes and grass.



Habitat of the African Pygmy Hedgehog. ^(A)

Countries

African Pygmy Hedgehogs are found native in Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Cote d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan & South Sudan, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda and Zambia.

1.2 Habitat

Despite the fact that African Pygmy Hedgehog aren't as known amongst people, the species is widespread in the wild. They occur in dry to moist halfdeserts, (sub)tropical dry grasslands and bushy areas.



Gazelle ^(B)

Especially places with a lot of undergrowth and nesting material in the form of leaves, small twigs and dried grass are favorite. They are animals that stay mainly low on the ground and will not climb much, although they can do reasonably well if the surface is not too slippery. They do graves all the more. Looking for insects and small prey to eat, but also to make a shelter.

African Pygmy Hedgehogs like to nest in gaps between rocks, hollow trees and often abandoned caves of other small animals.

In addition to insects and small prey animals that live in the natural environment of African Pygmy, they also share their environment with larger animals. All year round, large flocks of grazing animals roam around looking for new areas to graze. The Koringazelle, for example, occurs in the Sahel from Senegal to Sudan, while the Dorcas gazelle is much more northerly in the Sahel region; in the line from South Mauritania to Djibouti.



Afrikaanse Leeuw ⁽⁴⁾

Due to the many grazing animals and small animals, there are also several predators in the Sahel. The most famous species are the Cheetah and the African lion. They feed on the herds of grazing animals that roam here all year round in search of food. Although these two species of predators thrive reasonably in the Sahel, this cannot be said for their subspecies. The North West African Cheetah and the West African population of the African Lion are seriously threatened and are even about to die out in the wild. Another species that used to occur in this area, the North African cow, is already extinct in the wild.

1.3 Age

Unfortunately, there is no real research into the natural lifespan of an African Pygmy Hedgehog, but it is estimated that they reach an average of 3 to 4 years of age in the wild. They reproduce mainly in spring and autumn, although soft summers and winters can cause litters all year round.

1.4 Through the years

In the early 1990s, African Pygmy Hedgehogs were exported to America from their natural environment in the Sahel. They were first kept and bred as pets there, and then were sold to countries in Europe and Asia. The animals thrived, reproduced well in captivity and because of their cute appearance they became increasingly popular.

Today, the species is kept and bred in various countries around the world. There are associations to apply for pedigrees, shows are being held and more research is being done into general health & genetics.