



# Amazing Animals Fact sheets

## Echidnas

### Echidna profiles

Echidnas have slender snouts and long, flicking tongues. They also have 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.

### Prickles

Prickles is a very special little echidna. He was a patient at the Australia Zoo Wildlife Hospital after being found with an eye condition that left him blind. Because of his condition, he was unable to be released into the wild. Prickles loves his home at Australia Zoo and the other echidnas he lives with.

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