

# Egyptian long eared care sheet

## Egyptian Long-Eared Hedgehog<?

Hemiechinus auritus

### **Introduction**

As the name suggests, this is a long eared Hedgehog from Egypt and the surrounding areas. Its range is actually huge and covers many parts of northern Africa, the Middle East, parts of Asia, Mongolia and Russia. Some areas are sub-species and some even may one day be separated into their own genus, more work is needed scientifically to full explore the genus. By far the most common found in captivity originate from Egypt / Iran

The large characteristic ears serve the purpose of helping to cool the hog in the mid-summer and also provide excellent hearing, which is needed when searching for food in the deserts and steppe regions that they inhabit.

### **Appearance**

These are a medium sized Hedgehog, ranging from around 19 to 30cm in length and weighing in at around 200 to 400grams for a healthy specimen, weights vary from location to location. They have very distinctive and somewhat comical oversized and pointed ears and short stubby tail devoid of quills. The general quill color is brown banded; the color varies from each region slightly ranging from brown to grey using the iha color guide for aph. They have long legs and run with a much higher stance than other hedgehogs. The feet especially the fronts are also oversized again helping the animal in desert areas.

### **Lighting**

Like all members of the hedgehog family they are strictly nocturnal and spend much of the day in either self-made burrows or those of other animals. During the day they retreat to these burrows which are up to half a meter underground. Therefore they do not need bright lights in the home; rather a simple setup that mimics a change from day to night if sufficient, any type of uv lamp should be avoided as this may cause damage to your hedgehog's skin. If using a light source for heat see the heating section for advice. The day light period should last for approx. 14 hours a day.

### **Heating**

Heating the enclosure for a hedgehog can be achieved in several ways. Many

hedgehogs including the Egyptian long eared will adapt very well to room temperature. The African Species do seem to like a min of 19deg. if you find your room is colder than this then there are a couple of options that may be used . You will find that unless you live in a totally unheated house the ambient temperature will not be far from the desired min of 19 deg. and does not take much to raise over this. If you keep other hedgehogs such as aph, the Egyptian hogs will be right at home in the same conditions. When keeping multiple hogs it is usually more economical to heat the room rather than each environment separately, if only housing one or two enclosures then it is more economical to heat each separate.

Whichever option you take it is important to have a good quality thermostat attached to the heating device to ensure that the animals do not become over heated. The favored ways of heating single enclosures is by a small black light / red light or ceramic heater; these should always be mounted high up in the enclosure and covered by a guard as direct contact will burn the animal. For heating a room a simple fan heater, halogen heater or oil filled radiator again connected to a good thermostat is ideal. Always place the probe for the thermostat in the coldest part of the room and the heater facing away from the probe for an even distribution of warm air. I prefer the fan heaters as it also blows the air circulating it around the room rather than creating localized hot spots. Although if using an oil filled heater or halogen type the same results can be achieved by installing a small fan in the room to move the air around.

### **Food / Feeding**

The Long-Eared Hedgehogs are like all other members of the hedgehog family insectivores, Their Primary diet is grasshoppers and beetles; they also consume small amounts of green matter and will eat small mammals given the opportunity.

In the home environment the normal rules of a high protein, low fat, meat based dry food can be offered and is taken without much problems. However the long-eared must have an addition on insects in addition to this, meal worms and locust / grasshoppers and beetles should be added to the home, they will find no problems seeking these out if hidden around the enclosure. Feeding exclusively on just cat food has been linked to both dental problems and also organ problems, so it is safe to say the some essential requirements are missing from a cat food only based diet.

Offering small amounts of greens may be also beneficial , i have found mine will go weeks without touching any greens but then one evening will eat all that i put in the enclosure , for that reason i add a couple of small pieces of kale each night and remove the following morning .

I Have found that the long-eared seem to fair much better on the Marley's hedgehog

pellets and are eaten much better than cat food . Where as the smaller aph find this diet too rich.

### **Housing**

As with all hedgehogs they cover a vast amount of area on an evening, the long eared more so than most, with their slightly larger size and longer much more powerful legs, the long-eared hedgehogs need more space than their counterparts the aph. When selecting housing the minimum length should be 4ft by 18" minimum, this rules out the most common housing for aph, the zoo zone 2. Instead go for a 4ft viv or homemade enclosure. The more room there is to move about the more your hedgehog will appreciate this.

Even with a huge enclosure you will still need to provide a wheel for the hog to exercise on or it will show signs of stress , running up and down in the same spot , destroying its enclosure etc. etc. , They do fit comfortably on a silent spinner but i have not had to replace two because the running floor has cracked with the constant pounding. A much better alternative would be a bucket wheel of approx. 12" plus in size and a nice flat running surface.