

SHORT-BEAKED ECHIDNA

HABITAT

The Short-beaked Echidna lives in forests and woodlands, heath, grasslands and deserts.^[1] They are native to Australia and Tasmania.^[2]

DIET

They feed on insects and other invertebrates, ants, termites, and earthworms. They sniff out prey and have nostrils at the tip of their beaks that sense electrical signals from insects. As they have no teeth, they use their long, sticky tongues to catch and chew food.^[3]

REPRODUCTION

They breed between late June to early October. A female echidna typically lays one egg.^[4] Their offspring are called Puggles, which hatch 10 days later. They stay in the pouch for 53 days and are then placed into a burrow until they reach 7 months old.^[5]

THREATS

The decrease in fallen logs, tree stumps, and vegetation contribute to habitat loss.^[6] They are being pushed out of their natural habitats and towards urban environments, causing them to be more prone to dog attacks and vehicle strikes.^[7] They are also preyed on by foxes, goannas and feral cats.^[8]

CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT

The Echidna Conservation Science Initiative (CSI) is an Australia-wide^[9] science project which aims to record echidna sightings and collect scat samples to track population changes and raise awareness of echidna conservation. This involves public engagement and participation.^[10]



"Short-beaked Echidna" by danforster is licenced under [CC BY-NC 4.0](#)

DESCRIPTION

They are 40 to 55cm long,^[11] and 2.5 to 10kg in weight.^[12] They have dark fur, covered by hollow, barbed quills (spines). They have beige-and-black spines on their back and sides. They have pouches on the belly sides.^[13]

SCIENTIFIC NAME

Tachyglossus aculeatus^[14]

CONSERVATION STATUS

Least Concern^[15]

CLASS

Mammals^[16]

LIFESPAN

Up to 58 years in captivity/
Unknown in wild^[17]

POPULATION SIZE

10,000 mature individuals^[18]

FUN FACT

They are found on the tails side^[19] of Australia's 5-cent piece.^[20]

-
- [1] Australian Museum, 'Short-beaked Echidna', *Australian Museum* (15 July 2024), Habitat, <https://australian.museum/learn/animals/mammals/short-beaked-echidna/>, accessed 8 Aug. 2024.
- [2] Australian Museum, 'Short-beaked Echidna', Distribution.
- [3] San Diego Zoo, 'Short-beaked Echidna', *San Diego Zoo* (2024), Habitat and Diet, <https://animals.sandiegozoo.org/animals/echidna>, accessed 18 July 2024.
- [4] Wildlife Preservation Society of Queensland, 'Echidna info booklet', *Wildlife* (2020), REPRODUCTION, <https://wildlife.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Echidna-info-booklet-1.pdf>, accessed 8 Aug. 2024.
- [5] San Diego Zoo, 'Short-beaked Echidna', Family Life.
- [6] Bush Heritage Australia, 'Short-beaked Echidna', Threats to echidnas.
- [7] Wildlife Preservation Society of Queensland, 'Wildlife Queensland members' news', *Wildlife Preservation Society of Queensland* (2023), Conservation Challenges, www.wildlife.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/236-WEB.pdf, accessed 25 Sep. 2024.
- [8] Australia Zoo, 'Short-beaked Echidna', *Australia Zoo* (12 Oct. 2022), para. 2, <https://australiazoo.com.au/wildlife/our-animals/short-beaked-echidna/>, accessed 25 Sep. 2024.
- [9] The University of Adelaide, 'Echidna Conservation Science Initiative - Echidna CSI', *Adelaide* (23 Mar. 2022), Habitat and Diet, <https://www.adelaide.edu.au/environment/research/citizen-science/echidna-csi>, accessed 8 Aug. 2024.
- [10] Perry, T., Stenhouse, A., Wilson, I., Perfetto, I., McKelvey, M.W., Coulson, M., Ankeny, R.A., Rismiller, P.D., Grützner, F., 'EchidnaCSI: Engaging the public in research and conservation of the short-beaked echidna', *National Center for Biotechnology Information* (24 Jan. 2022), Abstract para. 6, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8812570/>, accessed 26 Sep. 2024.
- [11] Australian Museum, 'Short-beaked Echidna', Size Range.
- [12] San Diego Zoo, 'Short-beaked Echidna', Size.
- [13] NATURE, 'Echidna Fact Sheet', *Public Broadcasting Service* (18 Mar. 2022), Appearance, <https://www.bushheritage.org.au/species/echidna>, accessed 8 Aug. 2024.
- [14] Australian Museum, 'Short-beaked Echidna', Scientific name.
- [15] San Diego Zoo, 'Short-beaked Echidna', Conservation.
- [16] Australian Museum, 'Short-beaked Echidna', Class.
- [17] San Diego Zoo, 'Short-beaked Echidna', Life Span.
- [18] NATURE, 'Echidna Fact Sheet', Conservation Status.
- [19] Royal Australian Mint, 'Five Cents', *Royal Australian Mint* (2023), para. 1, <https://www.ramint.gov.au/five-cents>, accessed 26 Sep. 2024.
- [20] Animalia Bio, 'Short-beaked Echidna', *Animalia Bio* (2024), Fun Facts for Kids, <https://animalia.bio/short-beaked-echidna>, accessed 12 Sep. 2024.