

## Get to Know Spike!

**Name:** Spike the hedgehog

**Scientific name:** *Erinaceus europaeus*

**Size:** 20 to 30 cm

**Weight:** up to 1.2 kg

**Lifespan:** 2 to 5 years

**Species:** 17 species

**Range:** Throughout Europe, Africa, and Asia

**Food:** Invertebrates, sometimes eggs, wild plants and carrion.

### Interesting things to note:

- 1. What does their scientific name mean?** Hedgehogs' scientific name is *Erinaceus europaeus*. *Erinaceus* is the genus for hedgehog from the family of *Erinaceidae* (which includes hedgehogs and moonrats), and *europaeus* means Europe. They are in the phylum 'mammalia', which means mammals. We use species classification to group animals that have similar looking characteristics.
- 2. Their limbs:** Look closer on the drawing and you will find that a hedgehog's forelimbs and hind limbs are quite different. They have 5 toes on their front paws and on their back paws they have 4 toes. The reason for these characteristics is because hedgehogs burrow with their front paws.
- 3. Their teeth:** Hedgehogs have four different types: incisors, canines, premolars, and molars. The structure of their teeth is very similar to ours, as we are also mammals. (*A good activity to do is to bring out mirrors and have children explore the different types of teeth they have and what they are used for.*)
- 4. Their quills:** Commonly referred to as spikes, they are used as a form of protection. When hoglets are first born (born to a litter of 4 to 7) they are white. Unlike their back, a hedgehog's abdomen is nice and soft.
- 5. Numbers:** Hedgehog numbers are in decline. This is attributed to many different causes, making it difficult to tackle. With numbers in rural areas similar to Herefordshire falling by 50%, in comparison to 30% in urban areas since 2000. In urban areas populations are showing signs of recovery, which has been attributed to the importance of green spaces, gardens, and habitat connectivity. This disparity highlights the importance of individual and local action in supporting hedgehog populations.

### Activities:

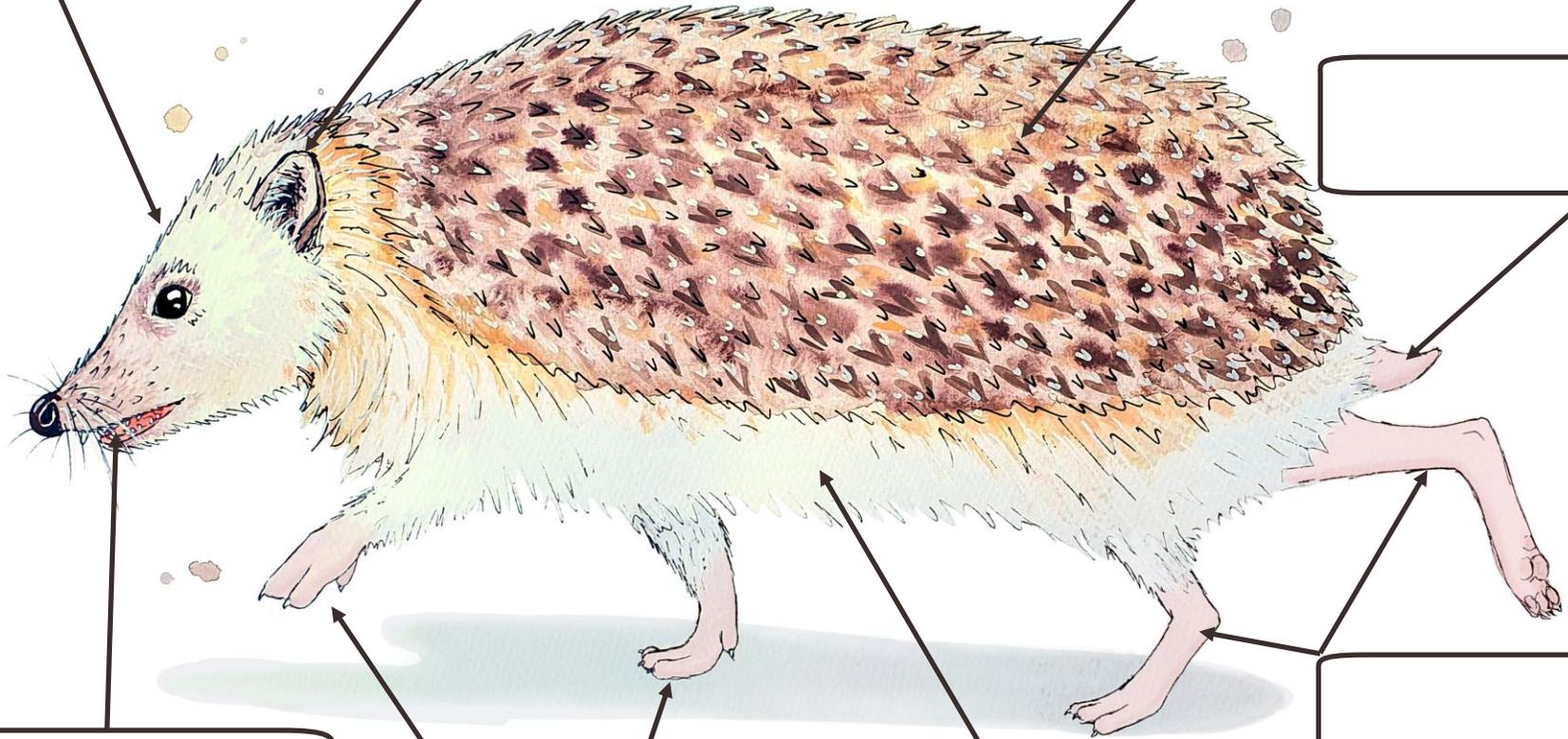
- 1. Hedgehog body parts:** Cut out the labels and place them in the correct position.
- 2. Hedgehog life cycle:** Cut out and place the life cycle card and label
- 3. Literacy:** Practice writing different body parts and life cycle names.

**Answers included.**

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Hedgehog *Erinaceus europaeus*

Ear

Spines/Quills

Forelimbs

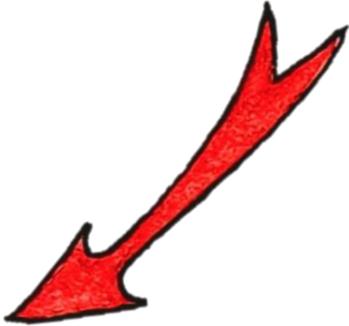
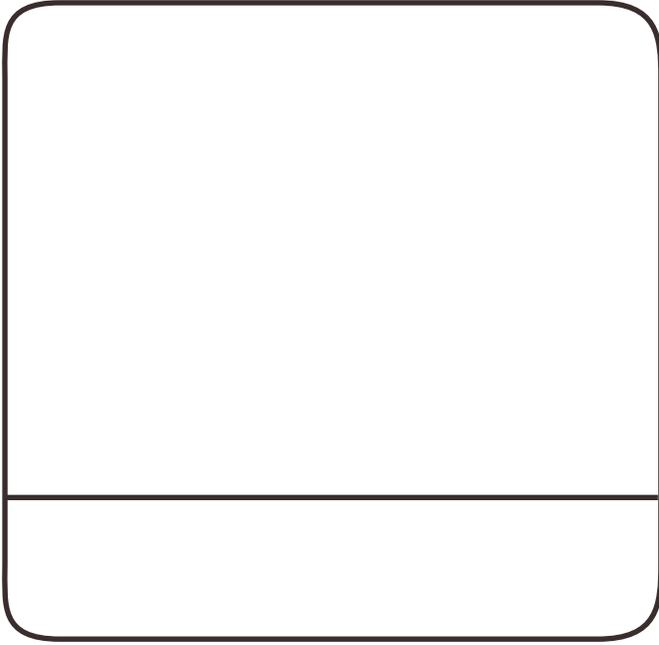
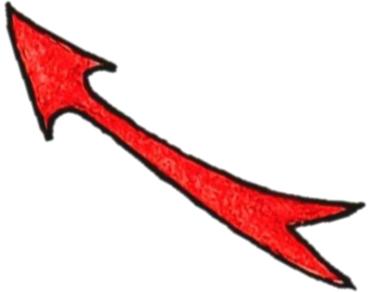
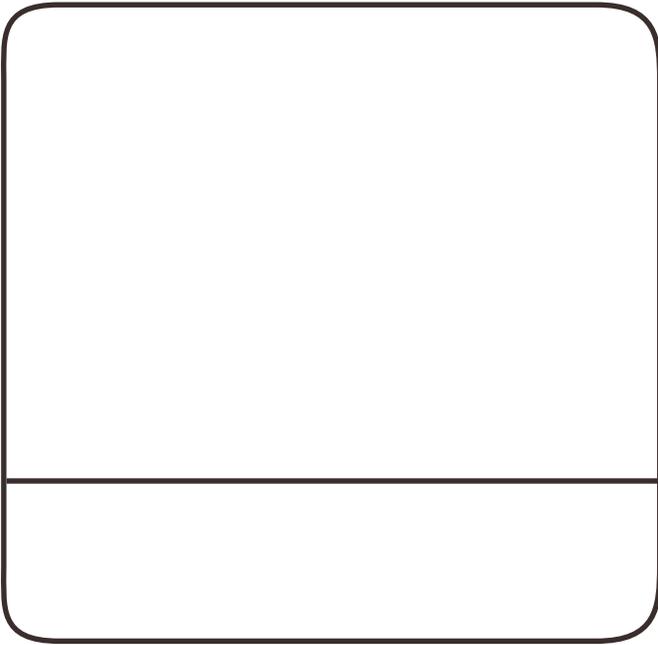
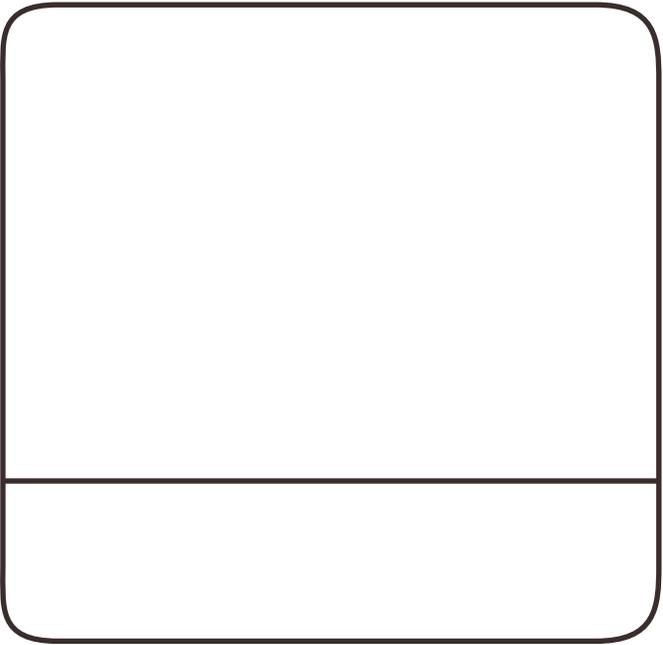
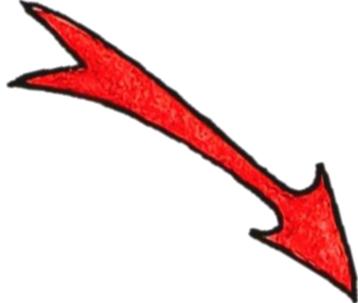
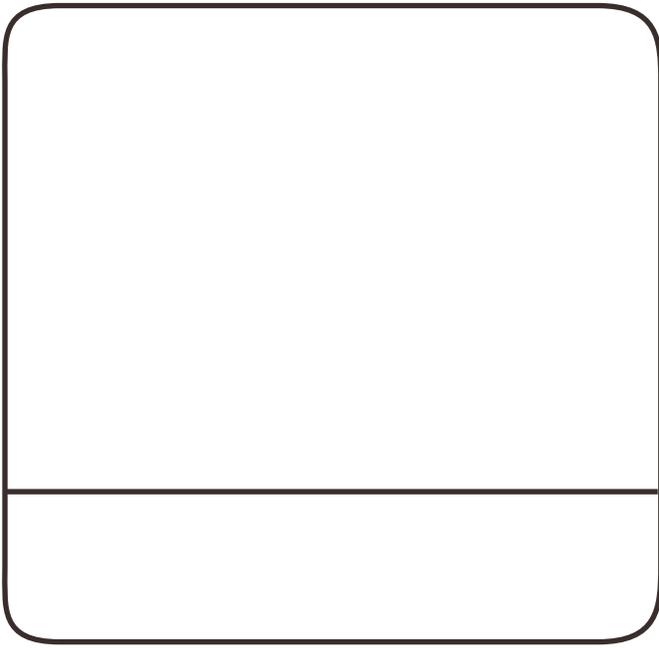
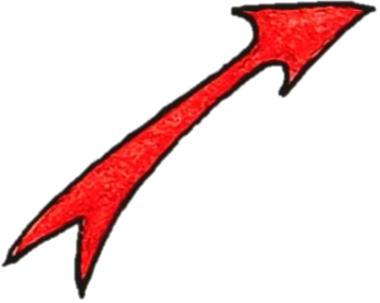
Snout

Tail

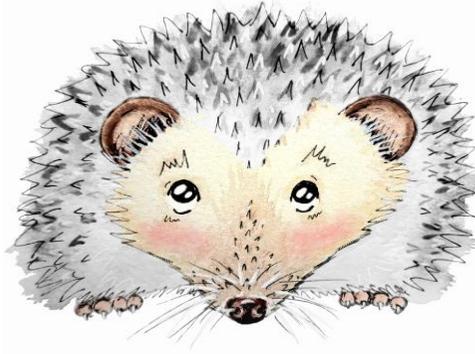
Abdomen

Hind limbs

Teeth



# Hedgehog Life Cycle

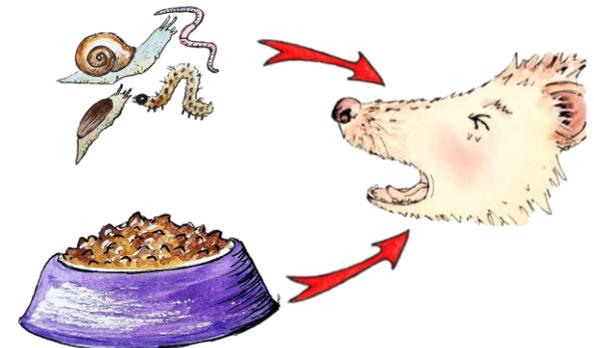


Finding a mate and a nest

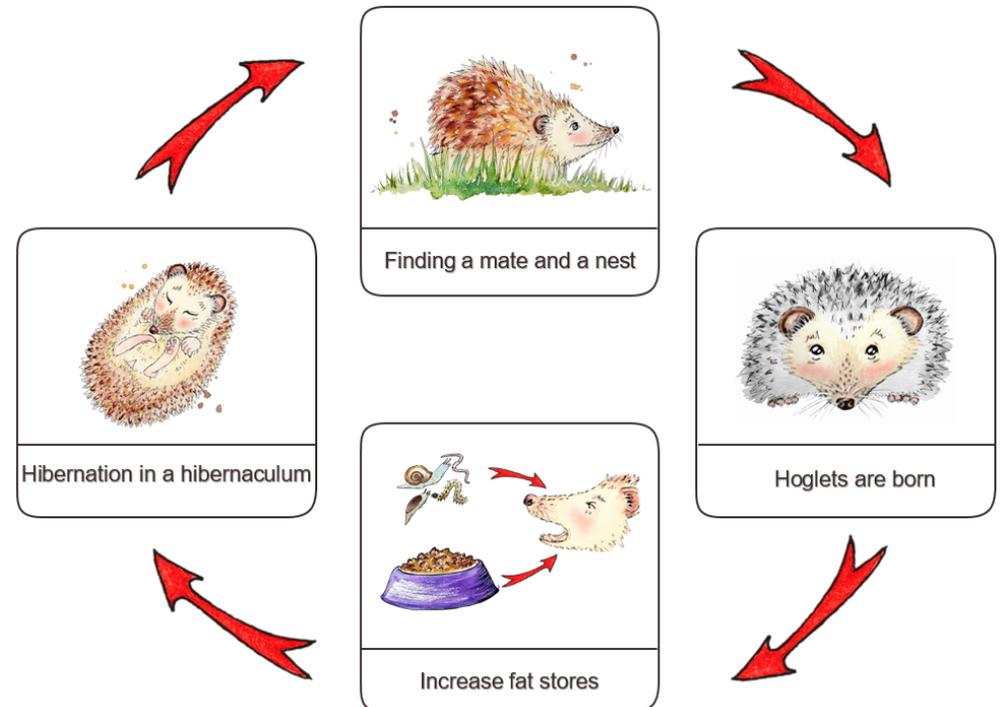
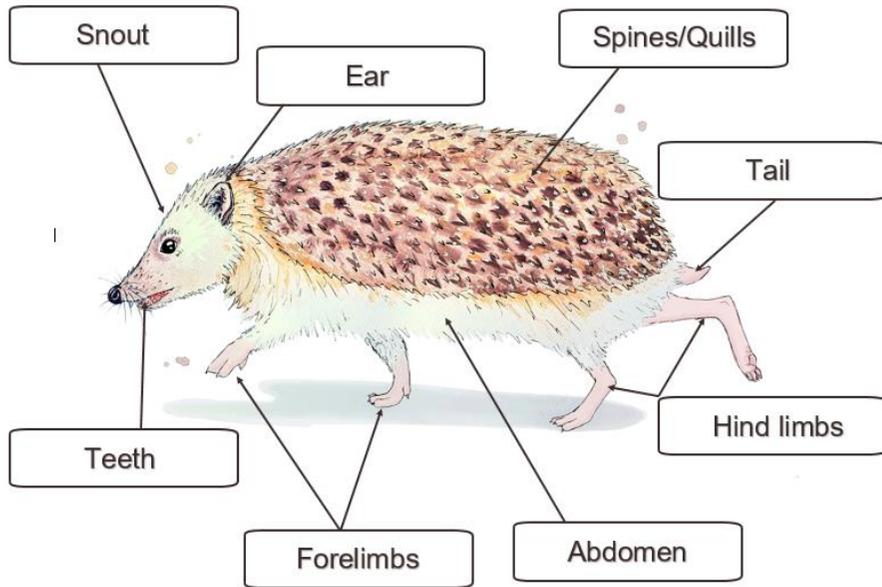
Hibernation in hibernaculum

Hoglets are born

Increase fat stores



Answers to diagrams:





Spikes

Spikes

Spikes

Quills

Quills

Quills



Snout

Snout

Snout



Ear

Ear

Ear



Teeth

Teeth

Teeth



Forelimbs Forelimbs



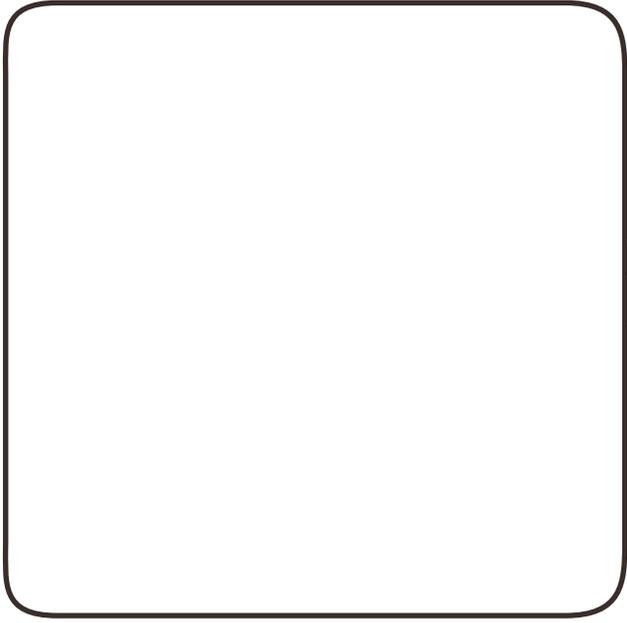
Hind Limbs Hind Limbs



Abdomen Abdomen

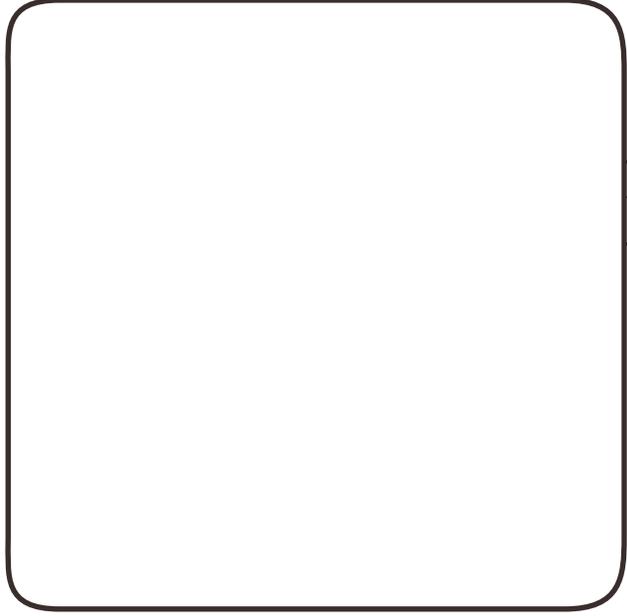


Tail Tail Tail Tail

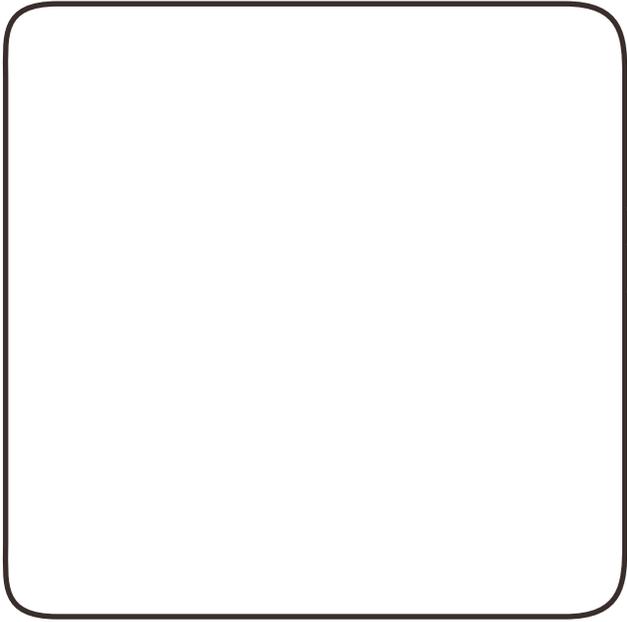


Finding a mate and a

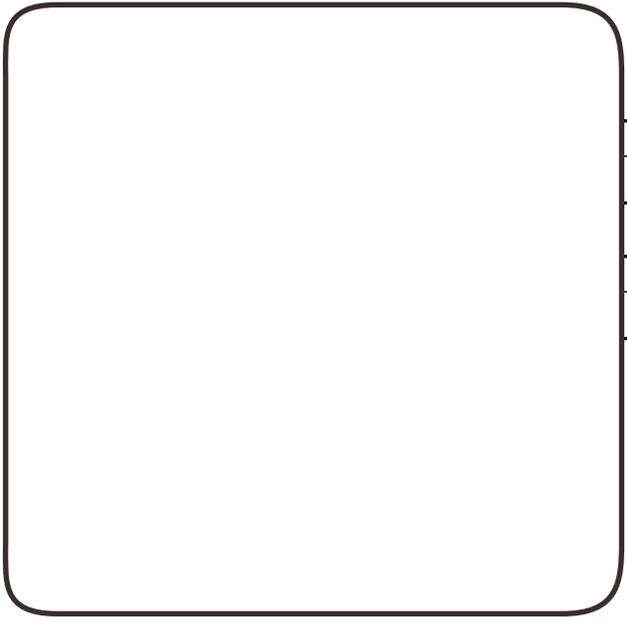
nest



Hoglets are born



Increase fat stores



Hibernating in a  
hibernaculum