**Erinaceus europaeus Linnaeus 1758**

*Erinaceus europaeus* commonly known as hedgehogs are native to western and other parts of northern Europe. They have been introduced to New Zealand and to island groups within their native range where they did not naturally occur like the Wangerooge Islands in Germany and the Western Hebridean islands in the United Kingdom.

The hedgehog is a small brownish nocturnal mammal (adults weigh 600-1500g) with a distinctive coat of spines covering the back and crown of the head. The front paws are powerful and adapted for digging while the hind paws are long and narrow. Hedgehogs typically roll into a ball when disturbed, enabled by a powerful dorsal muscle called the *musculus orbicularis*.

Invertebrates dominate the hedgehog’s diet, especially beetles and caterpillars which appear to contribute most to dietary energy. Otherwise, hedgehog diet is varied, and can depend on local conditions and prey availability, indicating an opportunistic feeding behaviour (Jones and Sanders, 2005). Hedgehogs prey on invertebrates and small vertebrates such as lizards and bird eggs and chicks. It has been estimated that hedgehogs can eat around 160g of invertebrates per day and are known to eat large amounts of individual prey types meaning they can have significant impacts on small localised populations of prey items (Jones et al. 2005). Hedgehogs compete with native insectivores (e.g. kiwi) for invertebrates. They also compete with kiwis (*Apteryx* sp.) for burrows (see *Apteryx australis; Apteryx haasti; Apteryx mantelli; and Apteryx oweni*) (Jones and Sanders, 2005).

Hedgehogs were found to be responsible for 19% of lethal events at 172 monitored banded dotterel (*Charadrius bicinctus*), the ‘Critically Endangered (CR)’ black stilt (*Himantopus novaezelandiae*) and the ‘Endangered (EN)’ black fronted tern (*Sterna albostriata*) nests between 1994-1994. In 2000/01 the figure rose to 78% (Jones and Sanders, 2005).

In the Uist group in Scotland hedgehogs are live captured using a variety of methods spot-lamping, live-trapping and searching with dogs.

**References:**
