

# *Atelerix algirus* (LEREBOULLET, 1842)



T. P. McOwat

## Distribution

**World:** North Africa from Mauritania to Libya, eastern coast of the Iberian Peninsula, Djerba, Malta, Ibiza, Formentera, Canary and Balearic Islands. Probably introduced to Europe and many islands by man.

**Europe:** confined to some localities on the Mediterranean coasts of Spain, the Canary Islands and Malta; seems to be extinct in France.

## Geographic variation

Four subspecies have been described, one of them (*A. algirus vagans* Thomas, 1901) from Europe (Menorca). Three subspecies are currently recognized as valid: *A. a. algirus* (Lereboullet, 1842), characterized by large size, on the African mainland, Malta and Canary islands; *A. a. vagans*, smaller in size, on the Balearic islands and *A. a. girbaensis* (Vesmanis, 1980), small and confined to Djerba and possibly the adjacent Tunisian mainland. Many island populations exhibit a high degree of colour variation.

## Habitat

Prefers lowlands and hills up to 400 m, but in Morocco it can reach 900 m (High Atlas). Prefers dry habitats, but may be quite common in grassland environments, farmlands, fields, meadows, gardens and various agroecosystems, showing, however, a clear preference for scrub vegetation areas. Has been found to be common in the vicinity of human settlements on Formentera.

## Algerian hedgehog

AL	-	LT	-
BG	Алжирски таралеж	LTJ	Algereschen Kéisécker
CZ	Ježek alžírský	LV	-
DE	Wanderigel	MK	-
DK	Spansk pindsvin	MT	Qanfud tal-Ferq
EE	-	NL	Trekegel
ES	Erizo moruno	NO	Algeripiggsvin
FI	Vaeltajasiili	PL	Jeż algierski
FO	-	PT	-
FR	Hérisson d'Algérie	RO	-
GR	-	RU	Алжирский ёж
HR	Jež selac	SE	Spansk igelkott
HU	Mediterrán sün	SI	Alžírski jež
IR	-	SK	Jež alžírsky
IS	-	TR	-
IT	Riccio algerino	YU	-

## Population status

In Europe the species must be considered very rare, perhaps everywhere allochthonous; frequent only on the Canary Islands and Malta.

## International legal & conservation status

Bern Convention, Appendix II.

EU Habitats & Species Directive, Annex IV.

## Literature

Corbet (1988)

Fayard *et al.* (1984)

Holz & Niethammer (1990c) – review

L. Lapini

