**African Pigmy Hedgehog**

**Native to:** Central Africa, deserts and grasslands

**Predators:** fox, wolf, mongoose, large birds, badgers

**Prey:**

* Omnivores
* Snails, small insects, worms, bird eggs, termites, grubs
* Berries, fruits, grass roots, root vegetables, mushrooms

**Facts:**

They are part of the mammalian family Erinaceidae which includes all hedgehogs and tenerecs

* Spines are not ejected, and do not fall out except when they lose their “baby spines” which are replaced with larger ones
* Do not hibernate like other hedgehogs because their climate is two warm year round
* Usually live in dens underground
* Source of food and medicine in some parts of the world still
* Used as pest control in central Africa
* Nocturnal
* Back feet have 4 toes, front feet have 5

**Defense Mechanisms:**

* Spines
* Curling into a ball
* Spines are made up of keratin (the same materials which make up your fingernails)
* Spines are hollow and filled with air
* Have a natural immunity to snake venom
* Can warn predators with grunts and growls, and by bumping

**Reproduction:**

* 3-5 per litter

**Lifespan**

* Live to be about 6 to 7 years in captivity, 3 in the wild

**Handling Tips:**

Pepper is a 5 years old male. He is very shy and will likely stay in a ball for most of the time that you hold him. Handlers may wish to wear gloves or pick him up with a cloth as his spines can hurt. If you turn off the lights, keep the students quiet and let him sit on a desk/the floor, he will usually poke his head out and walk around.