



# Lesser Madagascar Tenrec

*Echinops telfairi*



## Gilly

My birthday is on **June 15th, 2015**

I have a **laid-back attitude**, but I have my moments of **curiosity** and **spirit**.

I am an **ambassador animal**, and you can find me out on **educational programs** where I like to be presented in my **special pouch**. When I am not on program, I like resting in my hides or exploring my habitat for a tasty insect.

## TENREC AT A GLANCE



- My backside is covered in **sharp spines**. My spines are **modified hair** made out of **hard keratin**, the same thing your fingernails are made of.

- I use them for defense when I feel threatened by a predator.



- I have **poor eyesight** so I rely on my **hearing and smelling** to find food
- Using clicks from my tongue, I use **echolocation** to navigate



- I use my curved claws for both digging and burrowing.
- I am both **arbooreal** (tree-dwelling) and **terrestrial** (ground-dwelling).

In the wild, I eat insects, small animals, eggs, and fruit

Adult:  
5.5-7 inches long  
up to 7oz



Avg. life expectancy in native habitats:  
8-10 years

Avg. life expectancy in human care:  
up to 13 years

## WHERE ARE NATIVE TENREC HABITATS LOCATED?



The Tenrec resides on the island of Madagascar off the eastern coast of Africa. They roam the dry deciduous forests, spiny forests, and open grasslands of southern Madagascar. To seek shelter, they will climb into tree cavities to make dens.

# Tenrec Behavior

## DEFENSE

When I feel threatened, I raise my spines. As a last resort, I will charge my backside towards the threat and attack!

When I'm "puffed up", I may be feeling stressed and I need some space to relax.



## SELF ANNOINTING

I sometimes will use the saliva from my mouth and spread the foam onto my spines.

Scientists aren't 100% sure the reasonings behind this; it may be a sign of stress or uneasiness in a situation.



## VOCALIZATIONS

When I am unhappy or feel like I am in trouble, I will puff up my body and make snorting and puffing sounds. I do this to scare predators.

I feel uncomfortable in the situation that I am in. I maybe need some alone time.



## SLEEPING

I am naturally nocturnal, so I tend to be active during the evening hours and sleepy during the day.

I may be sedentary when you see me. I will need time to wake up and get comfortable before being seen



- When temperatures get colder, they go through **torpor** where they lower their body temperature and enter a state of inactivity to **save energy**. **Torpor** can last for **three to five months**.
- Tenrecs tend to be **solitary animals**, but will group up when going through torpor.
- Often mistaken for a hedgehog, but is part of the clade Afrotheria: tenrecs, elephant shrews, aardvarks, dugongs, hyrax, elephants and manatees.

# Tenrec Conservation

Lesser tenrecs are currently listed as **Least Concern**. While lesser tenrec populations are stable, Madagascar is facing deforestation due to mining for precious metals for electronic devices such as smartphones.



## How can we help?

If you have a smartphone or device that you would like to recycle, you can deposit it at specific locations, such as the Racine Zoo! Recycling smart devices reduces the need for more metals. Creating safe green spaces for animals in your background is a great way to help lessen the effects of habitat loss. You can plant more native plants or put man-made habitats to provide shelter for animals to feel safe.