

Echidna

Its full name is the **Short-beaked Echidna** and it is found throughout Australia.

Although referred to as a spiny anteater they are not related to anteaters - but they do eat ants.



Short-beaked Echidna (Peter Smith)

Echidnas are mammals. That is, they suckle their young - but they also lay eggs.

The echidna is a monotreme - mammals that lay eggs. As is the only other monotreme - the Platypus.



Short-beaked Echidna

An echidna's spines are long hollow hard hair follicles - which I can assure you are sharp and strong.

They don't have teeth and have a 15cm long tongue to sweep up ants and termites.



Australian 5 cent coin

The echidna graces the Australian 5 cent coin.

They're solitary animals and live their lives alone - except for mating.

Baby echidnas are called puggles - not muggles. They stay with their mother for a year before leaving home.

Echidnas have fur between their spines to keep warm.

Their back feet face backwards. This allows the elongated second claw on each hind foot to scratch and groom between its spines.



Short-beaked Echidna (Annie Tucker)

Look for echidnas in your travels, but as with all animals keep your distance and leave them be.



Have you seen an echidna?

Have you seen the echidna on our 5 cent coin?