



THE HEDGEHOG WELFARE SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER #82 SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2016

To protect the well-being of pet hedgehogs through rescue, research and education of the people who care for them.



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Free Roaming a Hedgehog Inside and Outdoors

By Amber Marcantel Petry

Free roaming a hedgehog can be very beneficial for the animal. In the wild, a hedgehog travels many miles a night searching for food. The hedgehogs we care for as pets – often called African Pygmy Hedgehogs (APHs) – still have the same natural instincts as they do in the wild. Free roaming is an option that can relieve some of the stress of being contained in enclosures when their instinct tells them to roam freely. It is one of the reasons why hedgehogs escape when an opportunity is found. After ruling out possible health reasons for self mutilation, I also stopped a hedgehog from self mutilating by free roaming him.

Socialization Benefits of Free Roaming

I have seen evidence in my own hogs that free roaming can help an unsocial or timid hog: they often become more confident, open, and social when allowed to explore.

Becca Denise Allen-Crawford, who lives in the UK, has a long-eared hedgehog, Batman. The long-eared hedgehogs are often less social than the African Pygmy Hedgehogs. When Becca first brought Batman home he was frightened, unsocial, and would bite at

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Her, refusing to be touched or handled. By allowing Batman to free roam, even while she's vacuuming and doing housework, Becca has helped him to become more social. He no longer bites!

My own hedgehogs now follow me around. Some even come when I call their names or tap. Rielei and Aegis will climb their cages to get to me and Lil' Girl comes out at 4:00—5:00 PM, daily, ready to roam.

I strongly feel that roaming is an essential part of socializing hedgehogs and enriches their lives. As with most things hedgehog-related, it's best to follow safety guidelines and remember that everything is per hedgehog: you will need to make adjustments on your hog.

Important Note

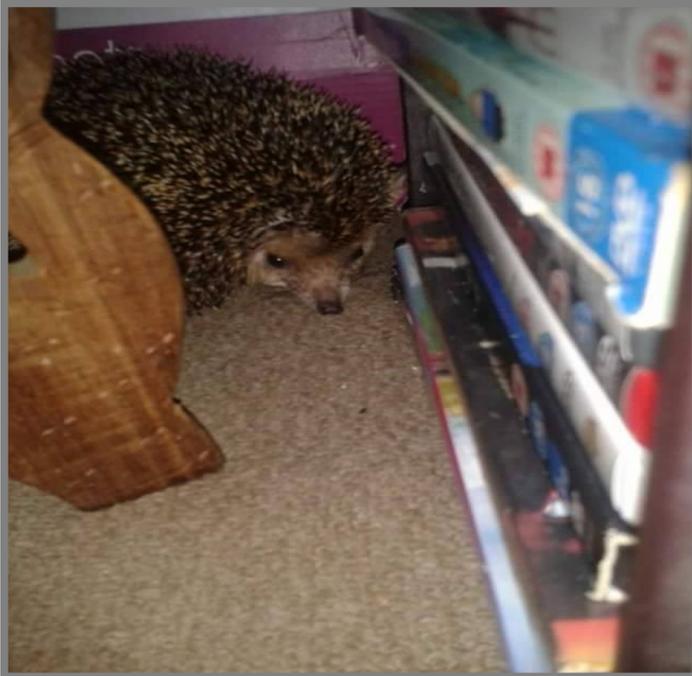
Multiple male hedgehogs should never be free roamed together. Multiple females that are free roamed together can suddenly have a fight and be injured. My Lil' Girl was recently injured by biting at Bernadette's quill skirt during a dispute over a paper bag. These two have free roamed together for almost two years, with no problems, until this. Hedgehogs are, by nature, solitary animals. You must always supervise your hogs if more than one is out at one time.

Hedge-Proofing, Indoors

Before free roaming a hedgehog indoors, a space or room needs to be hedgehog-proofed for their safety. All doors should be kept shut or baby gates put up to keep the hedgehog in the room. Doors that exit to the out-

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Any information contained in this newsletter is for informational purposes only and is not intended as a replacement for veterinary care if your hedgehog is sick or injured. The HWS cannot be held liable for any information that is contained in this newsletter.



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Side should never be opened while your hedgehog is free roaming.

Remember that hedgehogs can get into very small spaces, including under furniture and into appliances, and are especially attracted if there is a warm motor. It is best to block off all access to these hazards with a metal pet corral or something similar. Also, if you keep pesticides or chemicals in your home, it is important to keep those items out of reach of your hedgehog. Additionally, items that your hedgehog might be drawn to chew on, that could possibly damage teeth, such as metal objects, should be placed out of your pet's reach.

As you learn your hedgehog's ways, there will be items you will see your hedgehog trying to go into or bite that you will need to remove. My own hedgehog, Rielei, tore loose a corner of the liner under my couch (which sits about 8 inches off the floor), before I replaced it. Three of my hedgehogs followed his example and got stuck in the couch. Splotch got stuck in the arm of the couch and was there for 48 hours until I turned all the furniture upside down and got him loose!

Examining furniture for strings, loose materials, holes, stability, mechanisms, and chemicals is very important. You will need to remove any loose strings or torn material from the furniture to avoid it being wrapped around your hedgehog's limbs or even eaten by your hedgehog.

Remember that hedgehogs can be excellent climbers, should they choose to do so. My hedgehog, Aegis, can climb the vertical bars on his cage by wrapping his feet around them. He also climbs with ease, going straight up the back and arms of the couch using his nails and strong quill skirt muscles. While I am in awe of how well he climbs, he's not good at getting back down. Hedgehogs' quills are placed in a way that will absorb the shock of minimal impact, but they can also be badly injured in a fall. Removed or cover anything your hedgehog might climb.

You should also place a thermometer at floor level so you know the lowest temperature your hedgehog is exposed to, in case they slip off somewhere to sleep.

Behavior While Free Roaming

Some hedgehogs will happily move around in the open floor space. Other hedgehogs will hug the walls or stay hidden under furniture or in toys until they are confident and comfortable enough to come out into the open. The more consistently they are given time to explore and free roam, the more comfortable they will become.

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Some hedgehogs will be most comfortable starting out with you sitting on the floor while they hide in your lap. You can place the hog on the open floor from the safety of your lap. If it comes back to your lap, allow it to. That is where your hedgehog feels safe and comfortable. It is always “per hedgehog” as each animal is unique and has it’s own personality.

Be aware of how your hedgehog is reacting to free roaming and make adjustments as necessary. I provide a large dig bowl with insects, a wheel, a Spinning Saucer, PVC pipes, snuggles, crunch cat tunnels, and various safe toys in my free roam room. I also provide a water bowl and litter boxes for them. My hedgehogs enjoy following after each other and tracking the different smells in the room.

My hogs do have accidents. Hedgehog poop and pee is not messy, so I don’t mind it on my hardwood floors. Some hedgehog parents utilize hallways and bathroom floors for free roam areas to avoid carpets. It may help to wake your hedgehog and let it go to the bathroom in the cage before bringing it out to free roam.

When it is time to return your hedgehogs to the cage, closely examine them for hair or fibers which may be caught on their limbs or even in their mouths!

Free Roaming with Multiple Hedgehogs

If you have male and female hedgehogs, make sure they have no access to each other during free roaming time. Encounters can be stressful and could possibly lead to an accidental pregnancy.

Some of my hedgehogs roam with only a wire cage wall to separate one from another. Others I need to keep separated because they try to get at each other, stress out, or anxiously pace.

If you have other household animals, you need to use your judgement regarding whether it is safe to have them in the room with your free roaming hedgehog. Animals can become excited and, while meaning only to play, can seriously injure a hedgehog.

It is always important to supervise your hedgehog while it is out of it’s enclosure!

Free Roaming Outdoors

Important:

If you choose to let your hedgehog free range outdoors, you will want to preventively treat them for mites using medication purchased from your vet. The correct treatment depends on where you live. This will protect your hog from mites and other parasites that choose warm-blooded animals as hosts.

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My own hog, Rielei, was infested with Sarcoptic mites, causing him to develop Sarcoptic (red) mange, which is most often seen on dogs. He was so sick he had blood in his urine. I caught the mites on my calves and thought they were mosquito bites until my vet told me what they were. It is likely a stray dog infected with the Sarcoptic mites and mange shed them in my yard.

My situation is not unique. Amber Mae's rescued hedgehog, Penelope, came to her infested with Choreoptis mites, which are normally found on cows and horses! Even a flea will catch a ride on a hedgehog if another host is not available!

Finding the Right Place

When you're free roaming your hedgehog outdoors, you need to choose a safe place. Make sure the ground has not been fertilized or treated with pesticides. You also need to check the plants in the area and make sure they are not poisonous in case your hedgehog chooses to chew, ingest, or anoint with them.

Additionally, do not free roam your hedgehog on wet or damp ground. Wild insects are likely to be found there as they come to the surface when it is wet. Wild insects can be contaminated from pesticides, which can make a hedgehog sick. If your hog eats a wild insect, you will need to carefully monitor it for signs of illness.

You also need to control the amount of exposure to direct sunlight: Direct UV rays can cause a sudden change in temperature, which can stress your hedgehog's body. Also, sudden direct UV rays can be painful to a hedgehog's eyes, much like our eyes hurt when exposed to sudden bright light. Additionally, albino hedgehogs, which have a recessive gene that causes them to be color-free, are more sensitive to the UV rays than a hedgehog that has the protection of pigmentation in its skin and eyes.

Be aware of other animals that might injure your hedgehog, even if all they are trying to do is play. Although your cat or dog might be fine with your hedgehog, it is safest to avoid letting other animals near your hog. Be particularly attentive to the possibility of birds of prey: They will attack and fly away with a hedgehog! Look above and into the trees where birds of prey perch, watching for small animals to eat.

You need to really know your hedgehog before outdoor free roaming without a safety fence or playpen. A hedgehog can run very fast when it wants to. It could run into traffic, under a house, into the woods, etc. Hedgehogs can escape into the wild where they will not survive.

Do not put your hedgehog in a halter or leash. Their quills are not placed in a way to allow them to be manipulated without harm if the hedgehog curls up into a ball or tries to escape.

Behavior Outdoors

It is important to pay attention to your hedgehog's behavior when it is outdoors free roaming. Some hedgehogs may cling to you or want to stay in your lap as you sit on the ground. Not all hedgehogs immediately enjoy free roaming outside and some never like it. Know your hedgehog!

Final Thoughts

Choosing to free roam your hedgehog can be beneficial. It may help your hedgehog become more social, it provides new stimulus to keep the mind active, and it can help a hedgehog become healthier too.

But you need to know your hog! Don't force it to free roam if it is stressful for your pet. Always be aware of your hedgehog's surroundings and emotions.



Thoughts from the President

By Deb Weaver

As you read this Labor Day will be approaching. LABOR DAY?! What the heck happened to the summer? Wasn't it just Memorial Day, and the long, lazy days of summer were stretched out before us - - and what happened to the 4th? It was a very hot and humid summer here in Wisconsin, unusual for us. And as was the case for many of you, we didn't come close to getting enough rain. I did manage to enjoy time out of the city with friends, a couple of art shows, friends visiting the city, and time spent down at our lakefront. Oh, and as I write this, I'm thoroughly enjoying the Olympics. I just marvel at what the athletes can do. Their drive and dedication is something to marvel. And, as always, I'm looking forward to football season starting.

The ending of summer has got me to thinking, am I giving 100% to what I'm involved in? Have I signed on to a task with good intentions and now I'm letting excuses be my legacy? I've been a community volunteer here in Milwaukee for decades, and I've chaired my share of committees and events (one event for 3,000 people, that one almost killed me!). Nothing is more frustrating (and, in the case of chaperoning small children, dangerous) than folks who don't follow through and constantly drop the ball. Another trait I've seen is outright deception and lying from those I'm working with. These folks need to ask themselves a couple of questions: Do I have too many commitments? Has something in my personal life changed since I signed on for the job? Has my desire/passion waned? Is it time to re-evaluate my commitments?

Life's circumstances constantly ebb and flow, none of us truly knows what tomorrow will bring. However we owe it to ourselves to bring to tomorrow our best efforts and be accountable for our actions. If your heart's not in it, you shouldn't be either.





The Rocky Mountain Hedgehog Show 2016

Coming to You Live From Scenic Colorado Springs, Colorado

Teresa Johnson

The Colorado Hedgehog Society, an informal group of hedgehog fanciers, in conjunction with the International Hedgehog Association, is proud to announce the return of the Rocky Mountain Hedgehog Show this October 7th through 9th in Colorado Springs.

Hedgehog shows have long been a venue for folks in the hedgehog community to meet friends from the Internet, share ideas and knowledge, gain education from speakers, both professional and hobbyist alike, shop and trade wares for hedges and humans, and have fun.

The forerunner of IHA set standards for judging based on body confirmation, colors and temperament, hoping to encourage all to work for the betterment of our quilted companions and to create a true quality of life for them. Our show will have two judged competitions.

Sometime back in hedgehog history, Dawn Wrobel developed a pentathlon of agility games for some fun and interactive competition. You just never know what your hedgehog will do in these events. One of my best and most active "at home" ball runners decided to curl up and sleep when she was entered into an event! Other hedgehogs take off in the games like true Olympic style competitors. We are happy to have Dawn agree to revive the original set of games she developed at our upcoming show.

We will have a variety of speakers and story tellers beginning Friday evening at the Hospitality Meet and Greet and at least one special veterinary speaker at our Saturday night activities and banquet. All are guaranteed to be informative. Some will use humor as they present their experiences of life ruled by hedgehogs.

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Will be something for everyone's budget, items for hedgehogs and humans alike. Our hope is to raise funds to distribute to several hedgehog rescue operations. A few vendors have let it be known that a portion of their sales will go directly to HWS aside from funds the show my yield. Between HWS and IHA there is a wonderful network of many good-hearted folks who have opened up their homes to aid hedgehogs no matter what their age, gender, or health is. So save your allowance and bring it to the show...IT'S FOR THE HEDGIES!!

And no hedgehog show would be complete without remembering those who have left us to journey on. The first Rainbow Bridge Ceremony was conducted on Rainbow Bridge at Niagara Falls in 2000 after Pat Storm and I had a telephone conversation about some how paying tribute to our quilly companions. She contacted bridge authorities, told them what we would like to do and asked what guidelines we needed to adhere to and a plan was set in motion. Names of more than 200 hedgehogs and their caregivers were read aloud as folks dropped fresh cut flowers of every size, kind and hue into the water below. Not everyone can take their show to Niagara for this, so over the years the ceremony has taken many forms and has become a tradition that I am glad to have personally had a part in creating. Whether you can attend the show or not, if you would like to have your hedgehog remembered in our ceremony, please email directly at hedgewitch3@earthlink.net. I would like your hedgie's name and a color you associate with your hedgie (it is a Rainbow Bridge ceremony after all). For those who cannot attend personally, send that information and plus your snail mail address You'll find out why later!!

To wrap up our activities on Saturday evening, we will have a dessert of home baked hedgie-shaped and decorated cakes and a fiercely festive live auction of some very wonderful items, some long since discontinued collectibles.

And remember, every hedgehog, young or old, pedigreed or rescue, has an equal opportunity of presenting well on the judges' tables and bringing home a ribbon to adown their condos!

Warmly,

Teresa Johnson,

Rocky Mountain Hedgehog Show 2016

www.rockymountainhedgehogshow.com

“Lawrence – The Story of a Hedgehog Who Wanted to Fly”

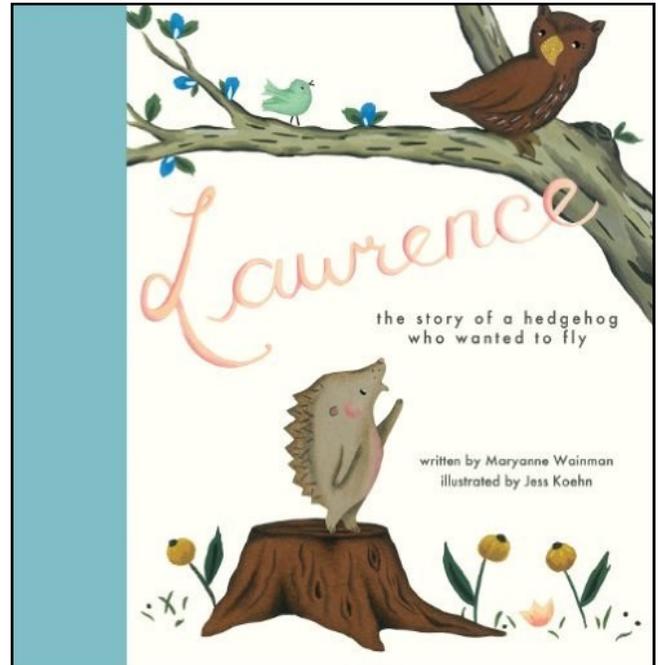
Written by Maryanne Wainman & Illustrated by Jess Koehn

Reviewed by Jennifer Plombon

This sweet little book was written and illustrated by two Canadians. The author says she saw a paper cut-out of a hedgehog, created by the illustrator, and was inspired to write this book.

Lawrence the Hedgehog is an “...average...relatively normal” hedgehog but he wants to fly. He wants to join the birds,”...to feel his quills ripple with the rush of wind...” (I love that image of rippling quills!) He tries jumping from objects such as rocks and stumps, but always finds him-self lying out in a meadow, watching the sky, and crying over his inability to fly.

Suddenly a small owl, Cyrano, begins to speak to him, and offers him a flight on his back. Lawrence excitedly accepts.



The wind DOES ripple through his quills! After the flight, Lawrence begs for a way to thank Cyrano, who finally confesses that his deepest wish is to be noticed by Gloria, a beautiful white owl with golden eyes, but he is convinced she will never notice his scruffy self. Lawrence is sympathetic, but Cyrano flies off. As the days pass, Lawrence tells the other animals about his flight with Cyrano and, as he tells the story, it evolves to speak more of Cyrano’s kindness than of the flight. And, as that happens, more animals begin to do small helpful favors for each other. Finally, one night a white owl, with sparkling golden eyes, sits listening to Lawrence’s story and determines to find the owl who started this train of kindness. Years pass, and Lawrence tells his story to his children and his grandchildren. As he sunbathes one morning, he sees a small, scruffy brown owl who reminds him of Cyrano. But THIS brown owl also has white streaks in her feathers and sparkling golden eyes. Lawrence closes his eyes, smiling, and imagines he is flying.

The illustrations are a mixture of paper cut-outs with water color and pastel backgrounds which mesh perfectly with the sweetness of the story. The illustration of Lawrence lying in the night, a firefly hovering over him, as a tear trickles down his face, is especially touching.

This is a perfect little book for every hedgehog fan and book collector. I recommend it.

The ISBN for this book is 146000161-3

It is available through Amazon and www.essencebookstore.com

PHOTO MONTAGE

BY MELODY BAILEY



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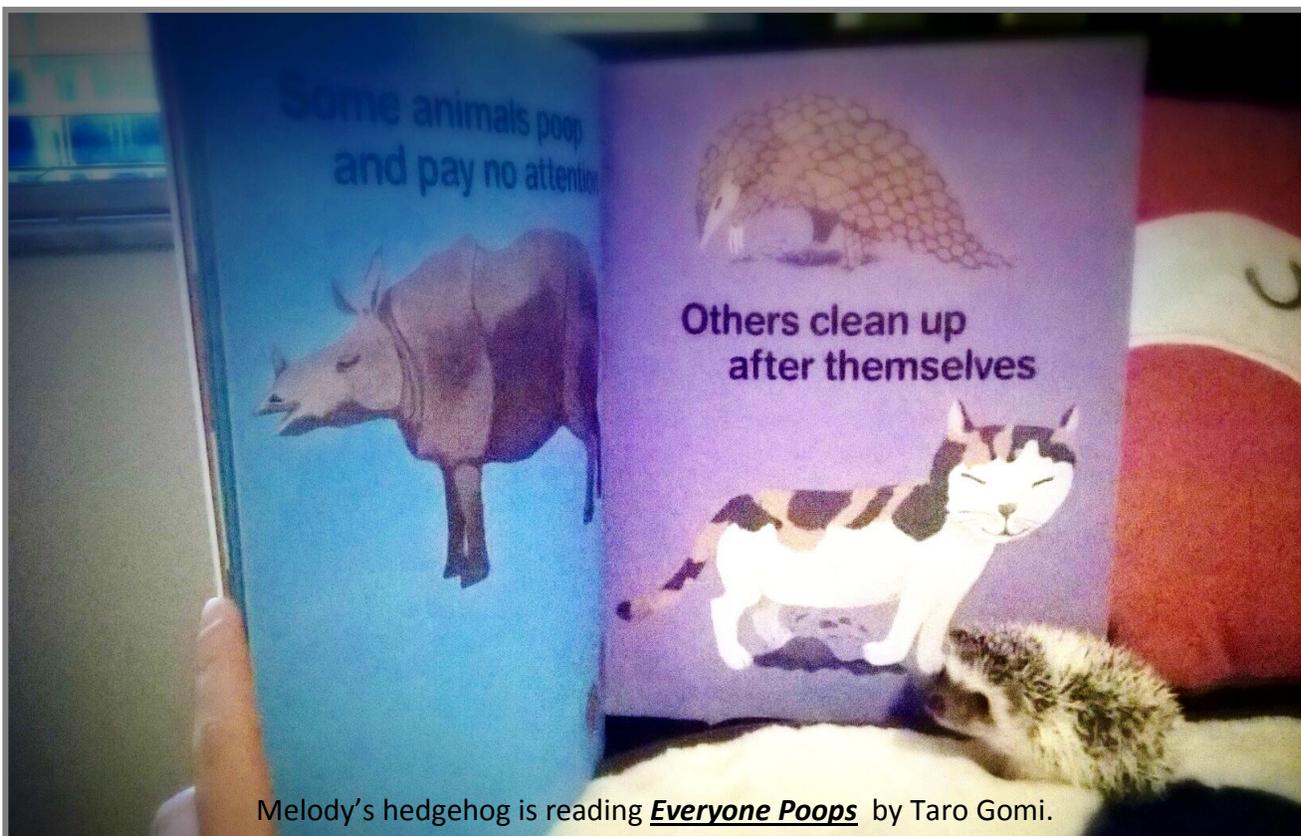
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Melody Bailey

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Melody's hedgehog is reading *Everyone Poops* by Taro Gomi.



ARTISTS WANTED



Would you like to help illustrate the Newsletter? We are always looking For drawings, photographs and art Work to include here.

Send your submissions in JPEG Format to:
newsletter@hedgehogwelfare.org

WRITERS WANTED



Would you like to write for the Newsletter? We are always Looking for stories, poems, craft Projects, recipes, puzzles, and Articles to include here.

Send your submissions or article Proposals to:
newsletter@hedgehogwelfare.org