

Seasonal variations in the diet and food selection of the Algerian hedgehog *Atelerix algirus*

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Description :

The Algerian hedgehog *Atelerix algirus* is an insectivorous species. However, the exact composition of its natural diet remains largely undetermined, especially in relation to seasonal variations in food availability. From March to November, we simultaneously analysed the composition of 180 hedgehog faecal samples and food availability in the Soumman Valley, Algeria to assess food selection in this species. The faeces contained 196 different prey species, of which 92% belonged to the class Insecta. The highest prey species diversity was found in the Coleoptera order (100 species recorded) and the highest species occurrence was found in Hymenoptera (65% of the prey items, mainly represented by the harvester ant *Messor barbarus*, a crop-ravaging species). This study shows that the Algerian hedgehog is mainly a generalist species with a diet that is strongly linked to food availability. However, seasonal ...

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