



by Katrina McKeever

SHE MAY look cute as a button, but beware - this prickly mother has developed a thirst for blood after loosing her nocturnal instinct.

Hedgehog Harriet, who recently gave birth to four little hoglets, has got day and night all scrambled, possibly after suffering a blow to the head.

With her body clock out of synch, the prickly diva has forgotten she is a lady of the night and now prefers to potter about in the sunlight instead.

In this unfamiliar world, she has developed a new strategy for dealing with her diurnal play mates - to bite everything in sight.

But these unusual habits makes her vulnerable as daytime prey and she cannot be released back into the wild.

Confused hedgehog draws blood in the cold light of day

Instead, she must leave her brood of hoglets behind as she heads for a protected pasture in North Wales to see out her dotage.

Martin Turner, of South Manchester Wildlife Sanctuary in Alderley Edge, noticed her penchant for daytime strolls after treating Harriet for an ear infection.

He said: "I went into the garden to fill up a water can and felt something bite me on the foot, I was stunned when I looked down and saw Harriet running off - they can really move. Later I felt a pull on my leg, she was trying to bite through my jeans, she is absolutely fearless."

He kept her in a sheltered garden in Lacey Green to keep an eye on her as she gave birth and was forced to take the little ones into hospital as they too developed a bad infection.

Although now all clear and ready to be released back into the wild, sadly their mum will have to be kept in sheltered accommodation for the rest of her days.

Martin said: "It is really very sad that we cannot let her roam free, but she was in a terrible state when she came in we did not even realise she was pregnant until we found the hoglets in the nest."

"But thankfully as we were keeping an eye on them we were able to rescue the young ones when they had a bad infection and give them a fighting start in life."

"And we have found a Harriet a safe home in North Wales where we can make sure she eats well and is well cared for and provide somewhere for her to hibernate during the winter."



PRICKLY trio: Martin with three of the hoglets. Top: Harriet