



Well recognised as the UK's favourite wild animal, the hedgehog is our only native spiny mammal. Not to be confused with pet African pygmy hedgehogs.

**COMMON NAME** Hedgehog

**SCIENTIFIC NAME** *Erinaceus europaeus*

**DESCRIPTION** 22-28cm long, covered on back and flanks by around 6000 banded spines; face and underside with coarse greyish brown fur.

**HABITAT** Wide range of habitats, in both urban and rural situations. Absent from large conifer plantations, marshes & moorlands. Suburban and urban gardens increasingly important.

**DIET** Ground-dwelling invertebrates especially worms, beetles, slugs, caterpillars, millipedes and earwigs. Readily eat meaty cat food or dog food provided by people too!



**HABITS** Generally solitary, non-territorial, nocturnal. Mobile and wide-ranging. Travel 1-2km a night, with urban range sizes involving many different gardens. Hibernate in winter. Tend to follow linear features when foraging. Rolls into a ball when threatened.

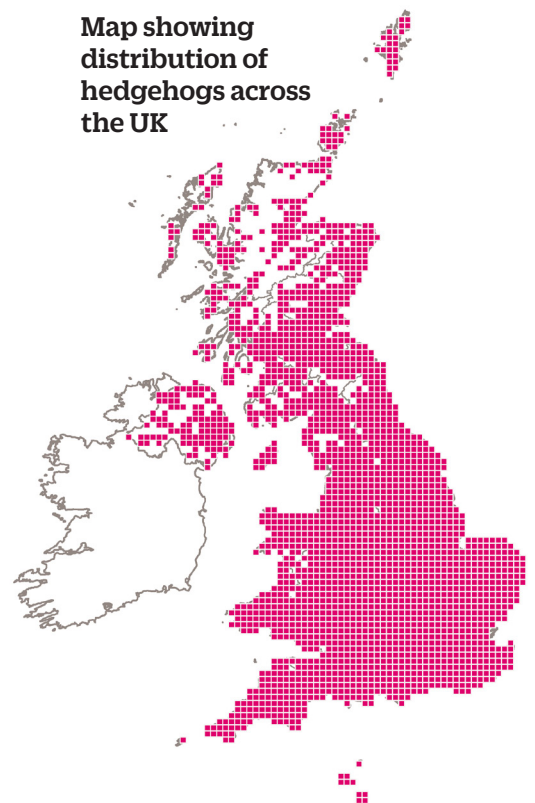
**BREEDING** Breed between April and September, with peak activity in May and June. Courtship involves lots of snorting, barging from the female and perseverance from the male. Mothers may desert or eat young if disturbed while nesting. Hoglets emerge from end of June onwards, are weaned at around five weeks and independent from then on. Females can attempt two litters in a year, but cannot rear more than one successfully.

**DISTRIBUTION** Hedgehogs are found throughout western Europe, including mainland Britain and Ireland, but are absent from some Scottish Islands and have been introduced to others.

**CONSERVATION STATUS** Although still relatively common and widespread, there is now considerable evidence for a dramatic decline in recent years, with around a third of the national population lost since the millennium. Declining in both rural and urban habitats, due to a range of factors. The hedgehog is legally protected from trapping or intentional harm, but none of the legislation deals with the drivers of the decline. *Hedgehog Street* is the only national conservation project and focuses on making gardens hedgehog-friendly.



Map showing  
distribution of  
hedgehogs across  
the UK



# Reasons for their decline

**There is still a lot to learn about the hedgehog decline - but also much we can all do to help hedgehogs now. This is why Hedgehog Street exists.**

These spiny characters live throughout the UK, across a wide range of habitat types, and the factors affecting them vary across the range. We know that hedgehogs are declining as severely in urban areas as they are in the countryside, so it can be helpful to consider urban and rural areas separately.

## Rural areas

- Widespread use of pesticides reduces the invertebrates hedgehogs eat
- Larger field sizes makes it difficult for hedgehogs to move around the landscape
- Hedgerow management by flailing now leads to the hedges with gappy bases, poor for nesting
- Intensive management of pastures with herbicides and fertilizers reduce the amount of invertebrates
- Increasing badgers – the main natural predator – may have an effect where habitat is already degraded
- Permanent pastures are also lost to the plough



## Towns and cities

- Impermeable garden fencing and walls limits the area of connected land available
- Gardens lost to car parking or decking directly reduces foraging area
- Busy roads cause mortalities and they can also disrupt dispersal routes for hedgehogs
- New developments usually lack any connectivity between gardens
- Hibernation habitat, typically scrubby or brambly areas, are frequently lost through overmanagement or development
- Over-tidy gardening can remove dead wood, replace foraging areas with drives and decking and clear away overgrown corners
- Use of pesticides and slug pellets can poison animals and kills the invertebrates 'hogs eat



## What is Hedgehog Street?

*Hedgehog Street* is a campaign to ensure hedgehogs remain a common and familiar part of British life. We know they're in trouble. We've lost a third of all our hedgehogs since the millennium.

Fortunately, hedgehogs love gardens, and there are around half a million hectares of garden in the UK. Hedgehogs need access to lots of different gardens to survive, so this campaign is as much about getting people to cooperate as it is about gardening for wildlife.

For more information please visit [www.hedgehogstreet.org](http://www.hedgehogstreet.org)

