

HEDGEHOG HABITAT MANAGEMENT

COMMUNITY TOOLKIT

KEY HEDGEHOG HABITATS:

SUBURBAN

GARDENS

WOODLAND
EDGES

HEDGEROWS

PARKS

WHY PROTECT HEDGEHOGS?



Hedgehog numbers have plummeted dramatically in recent years, estimated to be around 1.5million in 1995 in comparison to today's figure of just 500,000 remaining in the UK.

Hedgehogs are becoming increasingly reliant on urban areas to survive, yet rural populations continue to decline.

THREATS

Hedgehogs' population decline is likely caused by loss and degradation of habitats for development, agricultural intensification, and climate change. The trend for 'tidy gardens', paving and decking is often chosen over grass, and this is bad news for our prickly friends. Hedgehogs need more wild areas in gardens, such as leaf piles to shelter and forage for food.

The chemicals we may choose to use in our gardens such as slug pellets are lethal to hedgehogs.

Hedgehogs are our natural pest controls and a gardener's best friend. They rely on slugs, beetles, and other invertebrates for bulking up for hibernation, weight that is essential to their survival during the winter season. Some however, do not get all the food they need so providing a supplement food and shallow dish of fresh water can be helpful. Tinned dog and cat food or specially made hedgehog food are best. Never feed hedgehogs milk or bread, these do them no favors! Ensure you clean the feeding bowls between feeds to prevent spreading diseases.



favors! Ensure you clean the feeding bowls between feeds to prevent spreading diseases.

Hedgehogs can often fall victim to drowning in ponds and buckets of water. Although hedgehogs are great swimmers, they very often die as they cannot escape, leave a pile of rocks at the side of the pond for the hedgehogs to climb up to escape safely.

OUR ROLE IN PROTECTING HEDGEHOGS

Habitat enhancement can provide a recovery programme for many species, including hedgehogs and everyone can help make this happen. Here's a few simple things you can do:

BUILD A HEDGEHOG HOUSE

More than half of the hedgehogs die during hibernation as their homes are scooped up, disturbed or non-existent. We can change this by providing more messy areas, leaving piles of vegetation and leaves, or even building a hedgehog box in our gardens. Guidelines to make a box can be found on our website. By providing a safe place for hedgehogs to live and hibernate, you're more likely to get chances to see them in your gardens and neighbourhoods.



Example of a Hedgehog Hole, hedgehogstreet.org



CREATE A HEDGEHOG HIGHWAY

Hedgehogs can travel 1-2km a night over home ranges between 10-20 hectares in size searching for food and mates. Many sadly die as a result of road traffic collisions during these movements. We can help them get around safely by cutting a 13cm x 13cm hole in our fences for safe passage enabling hedgehogs to avoid using roads. We can go even further by asking our neighbours to do the same to create a hedgehog highway between neighbouring gardens. 'Hedgehog Street' have created a campaign of hedgehog champions across the country promoting ways that communities collectively can protect hedgehogs, starting with a highway. Guidelines and more information can be found on our website under 'actions'.

BE LESS TIDY

Wildlife thrives in wild spaces. We often make our gardens too neat and tidy, leaving no wild spaces. Let nature thrive to create an attractive habitat for wildlife. Try to cut back bushes and trees less often, leave leaf litter on the ground, throw clippings in a pile rather than in the green bin, make log piles and bug houses. Cut the grass less often and even better, leave a patch of long grass for bugs and insects. These small actions will not only help attract hedgehogs, but will benefit all wildlife, and the soils and its inhabitants.

Opt for a hedgerow boundary rather than a fence if you have a choice, this will give many species food, shelter, and nesting opportunities. Don't be disheartened if you only have a small, paved area or balcony, small actions to make a big impact to hedgehogs and all wildlife. Putting up a bird feeder or small bee hotel can help, protecting the pollinators and food source for mammals plays a vital role in supporting biodiversity.

All these small measures make less work for us and more food for the hedgehogs, it's a win-win!

BASIC HABITAT MANAGEMENT PRINCIPLES:

AVOID FRAGMENTATION OF HABITATS

Loss of hedgehogs natural habitat has had a huge determinatal effect on their population. Helping to restore habitats by planting hedgerows and trees can encourage hedgehogs back to an area and in time increase their populations across the UK. Loss of connecting gardens, woodlands and hedgerows makes it harder fo the hedgehogs to travel safely and find food and mates. Being less tidy in our gardens really is crucial to help the hedgehog population to recover along with many species.

RESTORE HEDGEROWS

As their name suggests, hedgehogs are lovers of hedgerows and extremely important habitat to providing shelter and food. Delayed trimming of hedgerows has shown benefits to many species in the UK by enhancing the hedgerow as a landmark.

A good hedge to increase habitat is one of diverse shrub layer and a wide margin and is continous connecting with woodlands and other habitats. A ditch will also enhance the value of the hedge.

AVOID THE USE OF PESTICIDES

Insect populations are suffering due to the use of insectisides and herbicides, therefore having a huge impact on availability of food for hedgehogs. Avoid using any slug pellets and weed sprays in your garden and let the hedgehogs, our natural pest controllers, do the work for us!

BECOME A HEDGEHOG CHAMPION

You can speak out for our prickly friends and encourage your neighbours to keep them in mind when out in their gardens. Creating a hedgehog highay in your street, getting together to build and distribute hedgehog boxes, and campaigning for one of our most adored UK species. Check out 'Hedgehog Street' to learn how to champion this species and what you can do to help them.



Green Connections Project Powys

Montgomeryshire Wildlife Trust, Park Lane House, High Street, Welshpool SY21 7JP
www.montwt.co.uk Charity Number: 512390