

European Hedgehog *Erinaceus europaeus*

Background

Hedgehogs are a nocturnal species and one of our few, true hibernators. They are largely found in hedgerows, gardens and agricultural areas. Numbers are thought to be declining steadily, especially from their stronghold areas in Eastern England, although there are no accurate figures for population numbers.

Although hedgehogs are often seen killed on the side of roads, this is only one in a number of factors that is thought to contribute to their decline.



Status in Wales

Range: Widespread, found in all counties.

Population: No accurate figures are available for Wales

Threats

(No threats have yet been reported for hedgehog as part of the BAP reporting, but these threats are commonly agreed)

- Increases in badger populations – local effects
- Increases in road traffic density – local effects
- Loss of habitat in the form of hedgerows and field margins
- Loss of habitat due to changes in gardening practices – patios/decking, fences without gaps at the base and pesticide usage
- Wounding from garden machinery such as strimmers

Legal status

Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), Schedule 6
NERC Act 2006 – Section 42

Lead Partner – The Mammal Society

Wales BAP targets

Insufficient baseline data available to set targets in 2009.

Targets to be reviewed in 2014.

Code	Target type	Target	Units	2005 (baseline)	2010	2015	2020	2025
HhT1	Range	Halt the decline and maintain the current range of hedgehogs in Wales	Occupied 10km squares					

Actions

Code	Action Type	Action	Lead	Ecosystem Groups	Delivery Agents
HhA1	Survey and Monitoring	Set up and run surveys to improve knowledge of hedgehog distribution. Ensure a national long-term monitoring system is in place with sufficient power to detect population changes at an agreed level.	The Mammal Society (Becky Clews-Roberts)		TMS; LBAPs; WTW
HhA2	Research	Promote and support a prioritised research programme to study population genetics, population fragmentation and its causes and linking hedgehog densities to habitat types. Use the resulting data to focus conservation efforts.	The Mammal Society (Becky Clews-Roberts)		TMS; NRW
HhA3	Habitat and Site Management	Ensure agri-environment prescriptions are available that support and encourage the maintenance and development of habitat features helpful to hedgehogs.	WG	Lowland Farmland; Brownfield/ Urban; Grassland and Heathland	WG
HhA4	Communication – Publicity	Raise awareness of and urge people to consider the need for providing hibernacula in otherwise 'tidy' garden habitats and encourage better management of urban sites.	The Mammal Society (Becky Clews-Roberts)	Lowland Farmland; Brownfield/ Urban	LBAPs; TMS; WTW
HhA5	Research	Investigate the effect on populations of incidental take by gamekeepers (several thousand per year in UK)	The Mammal Society (Becky Clews-Roberts)		GWCT
HhA6	Research	Investigate the effects of slug pellets on hedgehogs that they ingest from eating slugs and snails.	The Mammal Society (Becky Clews-Roberts)		

Issues affecting implementation

1. Lack of current distribution and status information
2. Lack of awareness by members of the public of the issues surrounding hedgehog decline
3. Insufficient liaison with gamekeepers

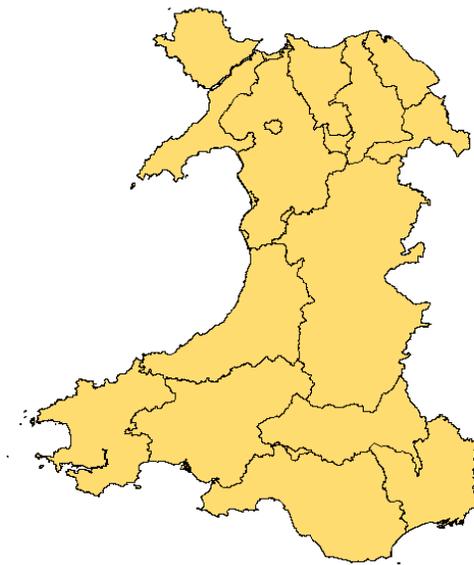
Ecosystems approach and enhancing species resilience

There is a need to encourage the implementation of good practice to reduce hedgehog mortality and minimise the impacts of habitat fragmentation. Activity to support this would include:

- Connect with landowners via RSPB Futurescapes and WT's landscape-wide initiatives to ensure preferred habitats are restored/protected

- Gain support from fencing suppliers to encourage fences sold for private gardens are hedgehog-friendly
- Where high levels of road mortality occurs, consider road signs to warn drivers (similar to the ones for badgers) and create hedgehog culverts to aid safe crossing.
- Provide training and best practice guidance to encourage those undertaking woodland works to leave log piles and brash on site to provide hedgehog habitat
- Provide training and best practice guidance for those who carry out strimming activities in areas such as parks/amenity areas to encourage them to undertake checks for hedgehogs before undertaking work.

LBAP areas where action is required (all Wales)



References/Links

People's Trust for Endangered Species: <http://www.ptes.org>

The Mammal Society: <http://www.mammal.org.uk/>

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