

## European Hedgehog Action Plan

### Introduction and Vision Statement

Hedgehogs (*Erinaceus europaeus*) are solitary animals, most active at night. During the summer they shelter during the day in temporary nests of leaves, moss and grass. In the autumn hedgehogs have to put on weight in preparation for their hibernation. This takes place in nests, typically situated under hedgerows. Hibernation takes place between October and March or April.



Hedgehogs are a "generalist" mammal, feeding on beetles, caterpillars, earwigs and worms, sometimes eating frogs, baby mice, eggs and chicks. Its habitat varies from hedge bottoms, back gardens and the grassy fringes of fields.

While hedgehogs are not considered to be endangered, numbers are in decline. Recent studies have shown that over the whole of Britain hedgehogs are dying out at a rate of about a fifth of the population every four years and the British population has dropped from roughly 2 million in the mid 1990s to possibly as low as a million today.

Hedgehogs are often killed by human influences, such as in ponds, bonfires, on roads, by trimmers and lawnmowers, pesticides (through ingestion of slug pellets or decline of prey species), garden netting and litter. They are also killed by foxes, stoats and badgers. Hedgerow removal may be a factor in their decline as, because they are edge-loving species, removal of hedgerows reduces the amount of good feeding habitat for them.

Gardens can be excellent habitat for hedgehogs – the mosaic of habitats often found suit hedgehogs, perhaps reflecting how the wider countryside used to look. The 'tidying up' of the countryside and our urban brownfield sites and garden do not favour hedgehogs.

Despite being an iconic British mammal there is much to find out about the hedgehog population in Carmarthenshire. Little is known of their numbers or distribution but, along with the rest of the country, there seems to be a decline in their numbers.

We would like to have a more complete picture about the population size and range of the hedgehog in the county and ensure that we have a landscape that supports a healthy population of hedgehogs.

### Action Plan Objectives

**HG1SP** To maintain and increase the population and range of hedgehogs in the county

**HG2DCM** To gather data on the distribution and status of hedgehogs in Carmarthenshire

**HG3RA** To raise awareness of the status of hedgehogs in Carmarthenshire and provide advice on habitat management.

**Actions**

<b>CODE</b>	<b>TEXT</b>	<b>START/END DATE</b>	<b>Lead partner</b>	<b>Action goal</b>	<b>Key partners</b>	<b>Funding</b>	<b>Priority L,M,H</b>	<b>Report Jan–Dec 2010</b>	<b>Report Jan–Dec 2011</b>	
<b>HG1SP1</b>	Ensure that parks in the county has habitat available for hedgehogs	2010–2015	CCC	At least 8 parks have suitable habitat	Grounds maintenance	-		Not started		
<b>HG2DCM1</b>	Undertake public postcard survey to help determine range and status of hedgehog population	2010–2015	WTSWW	Website recording set up P/Cs produced and distributed	CCC	✓		Action complete. Postcards produced and on line recording made available. Over 60 records received and map produced.		
<b>HG2DCM2</b>	Create a GIS layer for hedgehog records	2010–2015	WWBIC	GIS layer produced	CCC, WTSWW	-		WTSWW has produced layer. All records sent to WWBIC.		
<b>HG3RA1</b>	Raise awareness of hedgehogs through school programmes – provide worksheets for schools on hedgehogs	2010–2015	CCC	All schools supplied with work sheets		-		Not started.		
<b>HG3RA2</b>	Write article for the Biodiversity Newsletter on hedgehogs to encourage recording (including road casualties), habitat management and submission of records to WWBIC	2010	CCC	Newsletter item produced	WTSWW	-		Action completed. Article appeared in August issue of newsletter in 2010.		
<b>HG3RA3</b>	Disseminate information on managing gardens and urban green space for hedgehogs; put on website, inc highlighting detrimental effect of slug pellets	2010–2010	CCC	PR On line advice available	NBGW, WTSWW			Not started.		
<b>HG3RA4</b>	Send hedgehog postcards produced to gardening centres in the county	2010–ongoing	CCC	At least 5 identified garden centres with P/Cs	WTSWW			Not started.		
<b>HG3RA5</b>	Annual PR on importance of checking bonfires for hibernating hedgehogs	2010–ongoing	WTSWW	Annual PR produced	CCC			PR produced and sent out in 2010 – appeared in Western Mail – 5/10/2010.		