



HEDGEHOG *Erinaceus europaeus*

Introduction

The hedgehog is unique – it is the only spiny British mammal. A full-grown adult male may have as many as 5000 spines. Hedgehogs are found throughout Europe and Asia, and are widespread throughout the UK.

Hedgehogs *Erinaceus europaeus* are largely nocturnal and have a broad diet, including earthworms, slugs and caterpillars as well as frogs, young mice and voles. They travel up to 3km per night and have a home range of 10 – 30 hectares.

They live in a variety of habitats including gardens, parks, scrub, woodland and hedgerows. Urban and suburban gardens are particularly important for food and nesting. Hedgehogs hibernate for five to six months during the winter in nests built from leaves and grass under hedgerows, in old rabbit burrows and underneath compost heaps.

Hedgehogs have been voted the UK's favourite garden creature in a survey by the Royal Horticultural Society and the Wildlife Trusts.

Avon Wildlife Trust ran a hedgehog awareness raising project *Hogline* in the 1980s, which involved people recording sightings of hedgehogs in the former county of Avon.

Current Status

The hedgehog is partially protected in the UK under schedule 6 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act. It is illegal to trap or kill them without a licence.

Hedgehogs are also protected under the Wild Mammals (Protection) Act 1996, which addresses wanton persecution. They are listed under Appendix III of the Bern Convention and in 2007 became a priority species within the UK BAP.

The UK has around 1 million hedgehogs (a quarter of the world population) but numbers are declining and the species is of UK concern. It is thought that the hedgehog has declined in numbers and range in Britain by more than 20% since 2001 (Mammals on roads survey).

While hedgehogs are known to occur in Bristol, their distribution and population size is unknown.

Current Threats

- | Loss of suitable habitat and the creation of barriers to dispersal

- | Accidental death whilst hiding in bonfires

- | Lack of, or disturbance to, hibernation sites

- | Drowning in garden ponds

- | Poisoning from slug pellets and pesticides

- | Mowing and strimming of long grass can cause injury

- | Road kill

Objective 1: Establish the distribution of hedgehog populations within Bristol

Target:

- | Undertake Citizen Science survey of Bristol's hedgehog population

Objective 2: Maintain and enhance current hedgehog population

Target:

- | Encourage people to provide a hedgehog friendly environment in gardens and allotments
- | Ensure hedgehog friendly management of open spaces eg parks, cemeteries and allotments
- | Provide advice on how to manage habitats for hedgehogs

HEDGEHOG SPECIES ACTIONS	OBJECTIVE	DATE	IMPLEMENTORS
Establish and run Citizen Science project to record hedgehogs in Bristol and compare with Hogline Results	1	2009	AWT, BRERC, BCC
Develop awareness raising programme to include production of promotional materials to encourage hedgehog friendly management of gardens and allotments	2	2009	AWT, BCC
Raise awareness among site managers of habitat requirements for hedgehogs and provide best practice guidance	2	2010	BCC