

# Fun Facts



British Hedgehog  
Preservation Society



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Hedgehogs make 3 types of nests: summer/day nests, nursery nests and hibernacula to hibernate in. They collect leaves e.g. cherry, lime, oak, in their mouths for their hibernation nests and make a layered pile of them amongst shelter e.g. a hedge, where they won't blow away.



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A recent study estimated that there are up to 335,000 hedgehog road casualties in Britain annually. With more roads and traffic, the danger to 'hogs is rising and that is without considering the habitat fragmentation that roads contribute to. Drive with care!



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Hedgehogs sometimes "self-anoint" by flicking saliva over themselves after smelling/chewing something aromatic. They may do this to camouflage their own scent, to deter predators, to disseminate scent on the air or simply use it as a perfume... We just don't know!



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Although not immune, hedgehogs are more resistant to venomous snake bites than other animals.



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Adult hedgehogs have up to 7000 hollow spines ~2cm in length and banded brown and white. They are modified versions of hair, each moving independently and being lost individually. Hedgehogs use them as shock-absorbers and raise them when threatened for defense before rolling up.



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Hedgehogs roam far looking for food and mates. In a summer season, a male hedgehog can have a 50ha home range and travel up to 3km per night! Female home ranges tend to be smaller.



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Urchin is the Middle English name for a hedgehog, which is how the spiky sea urchin got its name.



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Hedgehogs come out of hibernation in the spring. Hibernation conserves energy when it is cold and food is scarce. Heart rate can drop from 280 beats per minute in an active 'hog to just 14, and breathing from 50 breaths per minute to just 13.



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There are 17 species of hedgehog worldwide, across 5 groups (genera). You can find them in Africa, Central Asia, the Middle East and Europe, but not in North or South America, South East Asia or Australia. Our species is the Western European *Erinaceus europaeus*.



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Hedgehogs live up to their name - they use hedges to nest in, as a food source, and to move around the landscape. They are noisy like pigs, snuffling whilst foraging and making other noises too e.g. puffing, snorting, chattering, screaming, squeaking and whistling.



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Female hedgehogs give birth to a first litter of 4-5 baby hoglets in the summer. Hoglets are born with sealed ears and eyes and with their baby spines not visible until a few hours after birth. They suckle and stay in the nursery nest for a month before venturing out.

These pictures have been used in our #adventhog campaign, one for each day of advent to raise awareness about hedgehog decline.