

5th December 2019

News Release from Warwickshire Wildlife Trust

New funding helps volunteers to monitor hedgehog populations in Warwickshire

Generous funding from the Naturesave Trust has been used to buy equipment for volunteers to conduct night-time surveys for hedgehogs.

According to the latest State of Britain's Hedgehogs 2018 report, hedgehogs have declined by up to 30% in urban areas and 50% in rural areas since the Millennium. Warwickshire Wildlife Trust (WKWT) realised that hedgehogs were in trouble back in 2013 and launched the Help for Hedgehogs campaign to raise awareness. After a surge of public interest, WKWT applied to the British Hedgehog Preservation Society for funding to set up the first ever Hedgehog Improvement Area (HIA) across the largely urban borough of Solihull in 2015. Following the success of this, a sister HIA was set up in the largely rural Rugby borough in 2016.

The aim of the HIAs has been to engage communities in hedgehog conservation, encouraging them to survey for hedgehogs and to make habitat improvements to benefit this struggling species. The HIAs are now coming to a close at the end of 2019 but a team of *Warwickshire Hedgehog Helper* volunteers have been trained to continue hedgehog conservation into the future.

New funding from Naturesave has allowed for additional equipment to be bought for volunteers to continue torchlight surveys of hedgehogs at key sites in the county. Set transect routes are walked after dark across areas of green and residential space, with volunteers listening and scanning the ground with high powered torches for signs of our nocturnal prickly friends. Torchlight surveys can not only tell us if hedgehogs are present, but can provide an indication of number. They also work well in areas where other survey methods e.g. footprint tunnels, are unsuccessful due to high levels of disturbance, such as from dogs.

Funding such as this has the potential to really make a difference. Although hedgehogs have been lost across urban areas since the Millennium, in some areas where they are still present, they appear to be increasing in number. Citizen science and community projects may be contributing to this positive change.

-ENDS-



Warwickshire

Warwickshire Wildlife Trust

Brandon Marsh Nature Centre

Brandon Lane

Coventry

Warwickshire

CV3 3GW

t: 024 7630 2912

e: enquiries@wkw.org.uk

w: www.warwickshirewildlifetrust.org.uk

Press contacts

Ed Green

Chief Executive

t: 024 7630 2912

e: ed.green@wkw.org.uk

Louise Barrack

Communications Officer

t: 024 7630 2912

e: louise.barrack@wkw.org.uk

Warwickshire Wildlife Trust

Registered Charity no. 209200

Contact information:

Dr Deborah Wright
Senior Hedgehog Officer
t: 024 7630 2912
deborah.wright@wkw.org.uk



Photo 1. A captured hedgehog being given a health check before the spines are marked with numbered tubes. Copyright Warwickshire Wildlife Trust.



Photo 2. Volunteers out torchlight surveying at a site in Rugby borough. Copyright Warwickshire Wildlife Trust.



Notes for editors:

1. **Warwickshire Wildlife Trust** www.warwickshirewildlifetrust.org.uk is the leading local environmental charity which works for people and wildlife in Warwickshire, Coventry and Solihull. The Trust looks after over 65 nature reserves and we are a voluntary membership organisation supported by more than 24,000 members and 560 volunteers. We promote a better natural environment for local wildlife and local people as part of our aim to create a living landscape in the West Midlands where wildlife and local people can live and thrive together.
2. **The Naturesave Trust** www.naturesave.co.uk/naturesave-trust/ is funded by the activities of Naturesave Insurance, the UK's leading ethical insurance provider for individuals, businesses, charities and community groups.
3. **British Hedgehog Preservation Society (BHPS)** www.britishhedgehogs.org.uk BHPS is a UK charity founded in 1982 dedicated to helping and protecting hedgehogs native to the UK. They run a helpline offering advice on caring for and encouraging hedgehogs in the wild and in gardens. They aim to educate the public on how best to help hedgehogs and fund research into the behavioural habits of hedgehogs to ascertain the best methods of assisting their survival.