

WILD YOUR SPACE

Wild your school
Rewild your children



Hedgehog Friendly Schools

The Conservation Volunteers Scotland are currently providing free CPD training for teachers and educators based on how to deliver our 'Hedgehog Friendly School' package. They have worked with over 20 schools across Scotland to offer this outdoor learning package which includes presentation, minibeast safari, hedgehog friendly school checklist, hedge planting for schools, mammal tunnel surveys and art & craft activities. Get in touch to register your interest at:

citizenscience-scotland
@tcv.org.uk.

Hedgehogs and Trail Cameras

Hedgehogs are one of our favourite animals – especially with children. And yet how many children have been lucky enough to see, or even find evidence of them living nearby, in recent years?

Obviously the combination of them being mostly nocturnal and likely to hibernate for much of the winter significantly reduces the chance of sightings, but there are also a lot less of them in existence. As a species they are definitely

present in the Scottish Borders, but they are listed as a priority species on the UK Biodiversity Action Plan, and as vulnerable to extinction on Britain's Red List for mammals. Once again habitat loss (no hedges = no hedgehogs!) and over-use of herbicides are major contributing factors, as are ever busier and faster roads.

In short, they are a species under threat (especially in rural areas), and they need our help more than ever. By educating our children about these wonderful animals, and by getting them

to help us to take vital steps to improve the situation, we will be making a vital difference to wildlife in our local area.

Hedgehog facts

- They are surprisingly noisy, and you may well hear them snuffling and huffing around before you see them.
- Baby hedgehogs are called – Hoglets (cute or what)!
- They are insectivores and eat mostly snails, slugs, worms, beetles, bugs, berries and fruit.
- A hedgehog hibernation nest is called a hibernaculum.
- They are fast runners, great climbers and even good swimmers.
- A typical litter is 5 hoglets, but it is rare for them all to survive.
- When hibernating, their heartrate slows from 190 beats/minute to around 20 beats/minute, and their core temperature drops to about 4c.
- Hedgehogs are frequently infested by fleas, but they are species specific and will not infect people or pets.

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How we can all help?

- Record and report sightings here - BIG Hedgehog Map If you are unsure about the existence of hedgehogs in your area a good start is to look for tracks – and poo (find pictures here European hedgehog | The Wildlife Trusts)
 - Ensure that Hedgehogs can travel freely in and out of school garden areas. They need effective corridors (not solid walls and fences) with holes at regular intervals. See Link your garden with a hedgehog highway
 - Provide food and water – appoint a class representative to look after this task. Keep a shallow dish topped up with fresh water and consider purchasing specific Hedgehog food online. Note that bread and milk will make them unwell.
 - Make your garden safe – No pesticides, no bonfires (or at least check very carefully before lighting one), have shallow ramps in any ponds, be careful if mowing or strimming, remove litter and old netting.
 - Increase suitable habitats – hedges, climbers, long grass, deadwood, less “tidy” areas and some space for one or more Hedgehog specific wild corners.
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- Buy or build a hedgehog home. This could be a basic log camp (approx. one metre square and 40cm high) with easy hedgehog access, packed with dry grass, hay and leaves and with a waterproof roof which is then further insulated with more logs and leaves. Or from bricks and slabs like so - Build a Hedgehog House - RSPCA - rspca.org.uk Or you could build one from plywood – such as this one from our friends at the RSPB - Build a Hedgehog House or you could buy one - Wooden Hedgehog House – RSPCA Shop
 - You could become a Hedgehog Champion - Become a Hedgehog Champion - Hedgehog Street or, ultimately, register to become recognised as a Hedgehog Friendly School.

Trail Cameras

Trail cameras have become more advanced, more user friendly and (importantly) much more affordable in recent times – with night vision and motion sensitive video versions available brand new for well under £50.

These could be an essential tool when looking for hedgehogs (and hoglets) in your school grounds when the children are all tucked up safe and sound at home. Indeed, your children could have hours of fun and education finding out what happens in their wildlife garden during the darker hours.

Depending where your camera is located, and whether your school is located near woodland, wetland, the river, etc., then it could be possible to spot not just hedgehogs, but any of the following – **Badgers, Pine Martens, Deer, Foxes, Grey Squirrels, Red Squirrels, Foxes, Otters, Voles, Shrews, Mice** and **Owls**.

Some of the staff at Bright Green Nature have lots of experience with Trail Cameras, meaning that we are in a good place to recommend purchase and usage. We'd certainly highly recommend them as a valuable tool to assist in studying and researching nature.



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