

CARMARTHENSHIRE LBAP EUROPEAN HEDGEHOG ACTION PLAN

Introduction

Hedgehogs (*Erinaceus europaeus*, Draenog) 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.



Hedgehog 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.

Hedgehog numbers have declined dramatically. The People's Trust for Endangered Species (PTES), a charity which has been running counts of hedgehogs for over a decade and compiled the figures, believes there are now fewer than a million hedgehogs left in the UK, down from an estimated 2 million in the mid-1990s and 36 million in the 1950s.

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.

Vision statement and objectives

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. Any action undertaken would seek to meet one or more of the following objectives:

HG1 To maintain and increase the population size and range of hedgehogs in the county

HG2 To gather data on the distribution and status of hedgehogs in Carmarthenshire

HG3 To raise awareness of the status of hedgehogs in Carmarthenshire and provide advice on habitat management.

Summary of action achieved by LBAP Partners (for more information contact the biodiversity officer – Biodiversity@carmarthenshire.gov.uk) or visit the national Biodiversity Action Reporting System - <http://ukbars.defra.gov.uk>:

2010–12

- Undertake public postcard survey to get records for hedgehogs† – WTSWW HG2
- Create electronic map of all hedgehog records received - WTSWW HG2
- Yearly press release to raise awareness of potential for hibernating hedgehogs in bonfires- WTSWW/CCC HG3

2013

- Ongoing collection of records via LBAP hedgehog survey and Carms Garden Wildlife Survey – WTSWW HG2

2014

- Yearly press release to raise awareness of potential for hibernating hedgehogs in bonfires- CCC HG3

Proposed future action

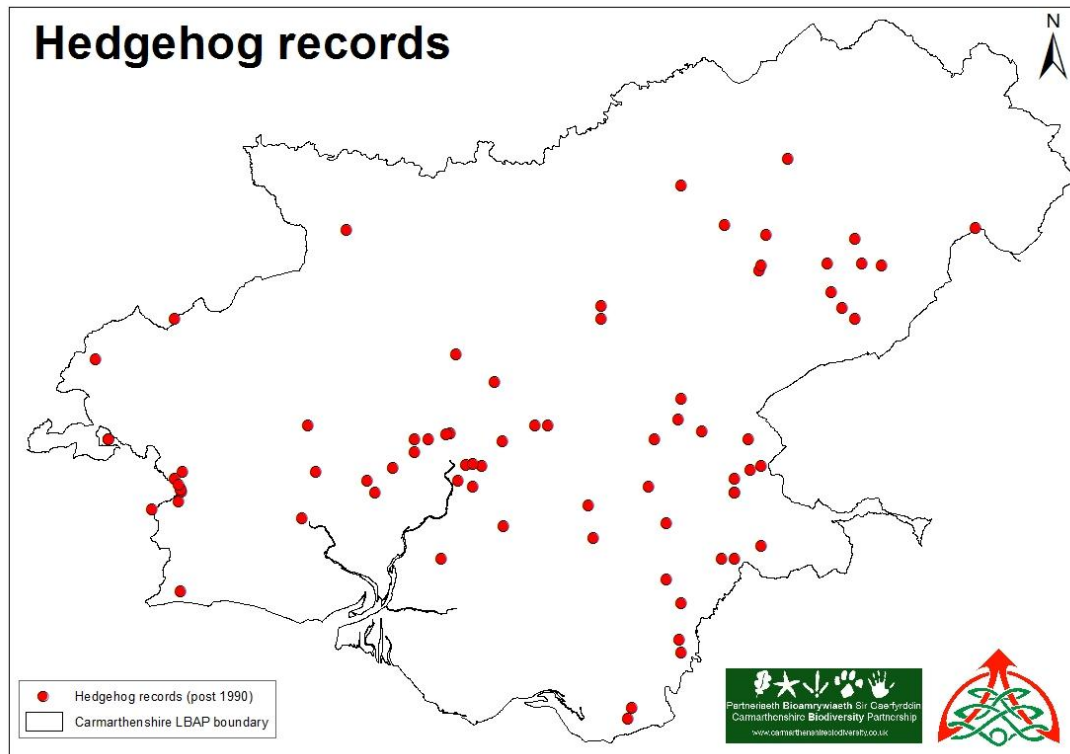
- Create habitat/features for hedgehogs in CCC parks - CCC HG1
- Provide worksheets for schools on hedgehogs - CCC HG3
- Produce an advice sheet for gardeners on wildlife-friendly gardening for hedgehogs- CCC/WTSWW HG3

Useful links:

- [Hedgehog Street](#)
- The Mammal Society - [hedgehog](#)
- The Wildlife Trust – [hedgehog](#)
- [People's Trust for Endangered Species](#)

Hedgehogs' highly specialised coat contains around 6,000 creamy-brown spines.

Folklore says that hedgehogs can predict a change in wind direction and will alter the entrance to its nest according to the direction the wind is coming from Aristotle wrote of the hedgehog: Echinus moved from one wall to another according to the direction of the wind.



Partneriaeth Bioamrywiaeth Sir Gaerfyrddin
 Carmarthenshire Biodiversity Partnership

www.carmarthenshirebiodiversity.co.uk

The [Carmarthenshire Biodiversity Partnership](http://www.carmarthenshirebiodiversity.co.uk) (CBP) is made up of the following organisations: [Carmarthenshire County Council](#) (CCC), [Wildlife Trust of South and West Wales](#) (WTSWW), [Natural Resources Wales](#) (NRW), [RSPB, Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust](#) (WWT), [Carmarthenshire Bird Club](#) (CBC), [National Botanic Gardens Wales](#) (NBGW), [Butterfly Conservation](#) (BC), [Carmarthenshire Rivers Trust](#) (CRT), [National Trust](#) (NT), [Botanical Society of the British Isles](#) (BSBI), [Llanelli Naturalists](#) (LN), [Bat Conservation Trust](#) (BCT), [West Wales Biodiversity Information Centre](#) (WWBIC), [Amphibian and Reptile Conservation](#) (ARC)