

# HEDGEHOG

*Erinaceus europaeus*

**SIZE:** 20-30cm in length

**HABITAT:** Woodland, hedgerows, parks and gardens

**FOOD:** Slugs, snails, caterpillars, beetles, earthworms, birds' eggs

## FAST FACTS

- May roam over 2 - 4 km a night in search of food.
- If threatened with danger, hedgehogs raise their 3,000 - 5,000 spines and curl up into a tight ball.
- Between November and March, when food is in short supply, hedgehogs hibernate in a nest in a hedgerow, compost heap, or under a thick layer of leaves or logs. Their body temperature drops and breathing almost stops.
- Hedgehogs are ready to breed in April. The female makes a nest of leaves and grass and has 3 to 5 babies. At first, the young are blind and pink but soon sprout soft white spines. By 4 weeks old, they're ready to go foraging with their mother, and in another 10 days, the offspring go their separate ways.

## ENDANGERED IN WANSTEAD

Hedgehogs are classified as vulnerable to extinction on the Red List of British Mammals. Numbers have declined by nearly half over the last 13 years. Hedgehogs are dying because of factors like traffic, loss of habitat and use of garden pesticides. In Wanstead, there are still a few around but the only known remaining stronghold for hedgehogs is in the area around the City of London Cemetery.

More information: [www.hedgehogstreet.org](http://www.hedgehogstreet.org)

Help scientists track hedgehog populations.

Report sightings at

[www.gigl.org.uk/submit-a-record/](http://www.gigl.org.uk/submit-a-record/)

**“British gardens are becoming poorer homes for wildlife with increased paving, decking and reduced plant life. And with more roads and housing developments being built, we’re seeing a huge loss of connectivity between green spaces, leaving hedgehogs isolated.” Hedgehog Street**

## HELP PREVENT THEIR EXTINCTION

- Don't use slug pellets or pesticides in the garden.
- Make your garden attractive to hedgehogs and the food they eat e.g. leave a wild corner, make a mini wildlife meadow, have a wildlife pond (with an escape ramp).
- Have habitats in your garden suitable for hedgehogs to hibernate e.g. an undisturbed pile of leaves or logs, or an open compost pile.
- Make hedgehog highways with your neighbours so that hedgehogs can move between gardens to find food at night. Create gaps in your boundaries of 13cm by 13cm (which is too small for nearly all pets to get through). Dig a channel under a wall, fence or gate - or cut a hole at the bottom of the structure.
- Switch to a mixed native hedge, but if you have to install a fence, use hedgehog-friendly gravel boards with ready-made holes.
- If you are lucky enough to have hedgehogs in your garden / neighbourhood, provide supplementary food, ideally dry or wet cat food (not fish). Find out more on feeding and shelter at [www.HedgehogStreet.org](http://www.HedgehogStreet.org).



WREN WILDLIFE GROUP - LONDON WILDLIFE TRUST - WILD WANSTEAD

Find out more at [www.wildwanstead.org/angered](http://www.wildwanstead.org/angered)