

Hedgehog

Erinaceus europaeus

Mammal · Active Apr-Oct · hibernates in winter



Photo by Thomas Bresson, CC BY 3.0, via Wikimedia Commons

Unmistakable: a small, round nocturnal mammal covered in some five thousand stiff spines, with a pointed brown face, small dark eyes and surprisingly long legs when it runs. Hedgehogs live in Dumfries gardens, allotments, hedgerow and woodland edge, but the British population has fallen dramatically and they are now a conservation priority. Most people's encounters are at dusk or from the noise they make snuffling through leaf litter.

BEHAVIOUR

Hedgehogs forage at night over a range of a mile or more, which is why linked gardens matter so much — a sealed fence line cuts a hedgehog off from most of its territory. They eat beetles, caterpillars, earthworms and slugs, and are noisy about it. From around November they hibernate in a nest of leaves under a hedge, log pile or shed, waking occasionally to move nest, and re-emerge in April.

WHEN TO SEE IT

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

QUICK FACTS

FAMILY	Hedgehogs (Erinaceidae)
SIZE	Body 20–30 cm · weighs 600–1,200 g before hibernation
UK STATUS	Protected from certain methods of killing; a conservation priority species

Photo by Thomas Bresson, CC BY 3.0, via Wikimedia Commons