



Snuffles Hedgehog Rescue - Four Oaks

Tel: Claire Hunt on 07889770958

Website: www.snuffles-rescue.com

Dear Householder

Re: How to Keep Hedgehogs Safe and Well

We are contacting householders in areas where we are not sure if there is hedgehog activity, to raise awareness of what you and your neighbours can do to help hedgehogs survive in the area. We would appreciate it if you could take a couple of minutes to read this letter and consider putting some of the points raised into place, to help protect any hedgehogs in the area. It is estimated that there are less than 1 million hedgehogs in the UK compared to over 36 million in the 1950s. The advice listed below will help prevent the wild hedgehog becoming endangered and dying out completely. This may happen before the turn of the next century unless we all take action.

- **Access between gardens** - Hedgehogs need to roam between 12 and 15 medium sized gardens at night, searching for food and during the breeding season (May– September) for mates. **Please make a gap in or under your fence or gravel board of about 5 inches square so the hedgehog can access neighbouring gardens and find enough food to survive.** You can buy hedgehog friendly gravel boards to make access easier. Visit www.jacksons-fencing.co.uk for details. It is very easy to dig a gap under your gravel board behind a shrub to allow hedgehog access. If you are worried about animals getting into your garden we know that cats, foxes and squirrels climb fences
- **Keep hedgehogs safe when gardening** - Hedgehogs are nocturnal and sleep during the day in leaves, compost and bushes. **PLEASE BE EXTRA CAREFUL IF YOU ARE USING A STRIMMER OR DIGGING** as many hedgehogs are injured or killed in this way.
- **Slug pellet danger** - Hedgehogs are very good for gardens as they eat beetles, earthworms, caterpillars and insects. They should not eat too many slugs as slugs carry lung worm. If you use slug pellets and the hedgehog eats a dead slug it will become very ill and will die a very painful death. There are alternative ways of killing slugs including nematodes and a product called Slug Gone. Visit our website for a fact sheet about other effective and easy methods of slug management.
- **Garden pond safety** - If you have a garden pond please make a sloped ramp or provide stepping stones for the hedgehog to climb out if it were to fall in, otherwise it will drown.
- **Garden netting** - A hedgehog can lose a leg and die if it gets caught in garden or sports netting. Please put garden netting above ground level and remove sports netting at night.
- **Drains and deep holes** - Please make sure drains are covered as curious hedgehogs can fall in and injure themselves or die if they are unable to get out.
- **Baby hedgehogs** - Watch out for unsupervised baby hedgehogs out during the day from June to October. If you think they have been abandoned or might be in distress, and you can't see their mum, call the above number for guidance **IMMEDIATELY** and visit our website for information. **ABANDONED BABY HEDGEHOGS CAN DIE VERY QUICKLY. NEVER TOUCH OR REMOVE BABY HEDGEHOGS FROM THE NEST UNLESS YOU KNOW FOR SURE THAT THEY HAVE BEEN ABANDONED BECAUSE IF THEY HAVE A HUMAN SMELL THE MUM WILL KILL THEM**
- **Food and water** - **Please do not feed hedgehogs bread or milk** as they are lactose intolerant and will be ill. They like meat based cat or dog food in jelly, small meat based cat biscuits and sunflower hearts. Even if you don't put food out for the hedgehogs **please put a large bowl of fresh water (a saucer of water is not enough) out every night to avoid dehydration.** Hedgehogs can drink up to a third of a litre of water each night and dehydrated hedgehogs die very quickly. Visit our website for details of how to make a feeding station to stop cats eating the food. In winter they need extra food to maintain weight.
- **Hedgehogs and dogs** - Visit our website for tips on how to keep hedgehogs safe from dog attacks
- **Slow down when driving at night and look out for hedgehogs** – more than 50,000 are squashed each year. When they hear vehicle noise they stop and curl up, putting them in grave danger

If you see any hedgehog out during the day looking ill, injured or lying around and not moving in a purposeful manner call your local hedgehog rescue for advice immediately as time is of the essence. Sick or injured hedgehogs can die within a few hours and need specialist care. A hedgehog can look well but have internal parasites or injuries, which can kill them

Thank you for your support in keeping these beautiful wild creatures alive

Claire Hunt - Founder of Snuffles Hedgehog Rescue

Version 1 – June 2017