

Why are hedgehogs in trouble?



Habitat loss



New developments, in-filling of gardens, roads, impermeable boundaries, 'over-management'

Roads, walls, fences, housing developments stopping movement

Larger field sizes, increased pesticide use, limited areas of scrub and decaying wood

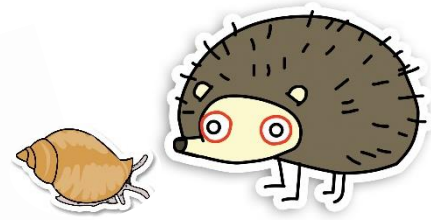
Habitat fragmentation



Intensive Agriculture



Hedgehogs are highly active and range widely, needing to be able to move freely through a well-connected range of habitats to find food, mates and areas to nest. Habitat loss from new developments, in-filling of gardens with housing, roads, impermeable boundaries, fences, walls and 'over-management' of green-spaces and gardens are all threats. We need to make sure that the habitat is connected, allowing dispersal and immigration. Also, evidence shows that hedgehogs are faring particularly poorly across agricultural landscapes. This is due to a range of factors: habitat fragmentation from loss of hedgerows, larger field sizes, increased pesticide use and limited areas of scrub, decaying wood or nectar rich planting.



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Hedgerow Loss



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Ideal locations for hedgehog nesting sites and important movement corridors lost

Pesticides, herbicides, and rodenticides can be highly toxic, directly & indirectly

Slug pellets are potentially lethal if directly ingested and reduce important prey

Pesticides



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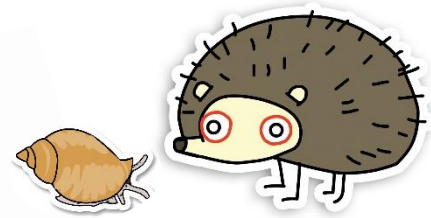
Slug Pellets



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Due to agricultural intensification, there has been around a 50% decline in hedgerows in rural Britain since 1945. Hedgerows provide ideal locations for hedgehog nesting sites as well as being important movement corridors. The scale of the loss of hedgerows will certainly have had an impact on rural hedgehog populations. Pesticides, herbicides, and rodenticides are also a threat to hedgehogs; and can be highly toxic, can impact non-target species, and can have both direct and indirect impacts on hedgehogs. Herbicides can directly reduce earthworm density and reduce the varied ground cover needed for foraging, and slug pellets are potentially lethal if directly ingested whilst also reducing important prey sources.





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Predation & Competition

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Main natural predator of hedgehogs and compete for similar prey

Barriers to hedgehog movement & a large source of mortality

Obvious signs of injury or if they're stuck/trapped/in trouble

Roadkill



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Injuries



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Badgers are the main natural predator of hedgehogs and also compete for similar prey. Their numbers are increasing, and they can create 'behavioural fragmentation' where hedgehogs actively avoid them, as well as preying on them when other food is scarce. In addition, roads can act as barriers to hedgehog movement, may have genetic impacts on populations and are a large source of mortality. The most obvious impact of roads on hedgehogs is direct mortality. Hedgehogs are susceptible to being run over – their defensive nature is to ball up and not move. Finally, if a hedgehog is out in the day, orphaned, injured, poisoned or cold and starving; it desperately needs help. As well as obvious signs of injury or if they're stuck/trapped/in trouble.



