



Hedgehogs

By



Have you ever seen a
hedgehog?



What is a Hedgehog?

A hedgehog is a solitary creature.

A solitary animal likes spending time
alone.

Where Hedgehogs are found ?

There are 14 types of Hedgehogs worldwide, which come in different size and colours.

But the ones that live in Britain are the European Hedgehog.

Where is our hedgehog found?

European distribution of our native hedgehog



Nocturnal

Hedgehogs are Nocturnal mammals, this means they only come out at Night.

Hedgehogs sleep during the day.

It doesn't just sleep to rest, but to protect itself from when it is very hot or cold.

You should not see a hedgehog during the day, if you do this means it is not well.

They do not see well in the dark and their sense of smell helps them forage and hunt.

Males travel 2 kilometres each night.



Why is it called a hedgehog?



They make a snuffling noise when they look for food and sound like hog.

They dig a burrow under hedges, that' s how I got my name.

Hedge + hog.

What does a hedgehog look like?

Hedgehogs have spines covering most of their body.

An adult can have between 5000- 7500 spines.

The spines last for a year, they drop off and then they grow again!

Their faces, legs and tummies are covered with soft fur.

A hedgehog is small, It will fit into an adults hands.



Habitat

They build their nest in shrubs ,bushes, log piles or under a garden shed.

The nests are made from leaves or small twigs and branches.



Communication

A Hedgehog makes different sounds.

When looking for food it makes a grunting sound.

A Hedgehog squeaks loudly when annoyed or disturbed.

You don't want to disturb a Hedgehog!

When in pain it screams loudly.



Life Span



Compared to other small animals, a hedgehog has a long lifetime.

It can live up to 7 years in the wild.

Over half die within their first year.

Average life expectancy is 2-3 years in the wild.

Mating

Hedgehogs live alone and only look for company when they mate.

Male hedgehogs stay with Females for a few hours to convince them to mate.

Once the female gives birth the Male will leave them.

Females give birth after a 40 day period.



Hoglets

When a Hedgehog is born, it will be born with 4-5 other Hedgehog babies.

These baby Hedgehogs are called Hoglets.

Baby hedgehogs are born in June and July.

Hoglets do not have spines when they are born, these push through their skin after a few hours.

Hoglets are also born blind,
but are able to see after a few weeks.

They stay with their Mums for 7 weeks,
then they live on their own.



Hedgehog Diet

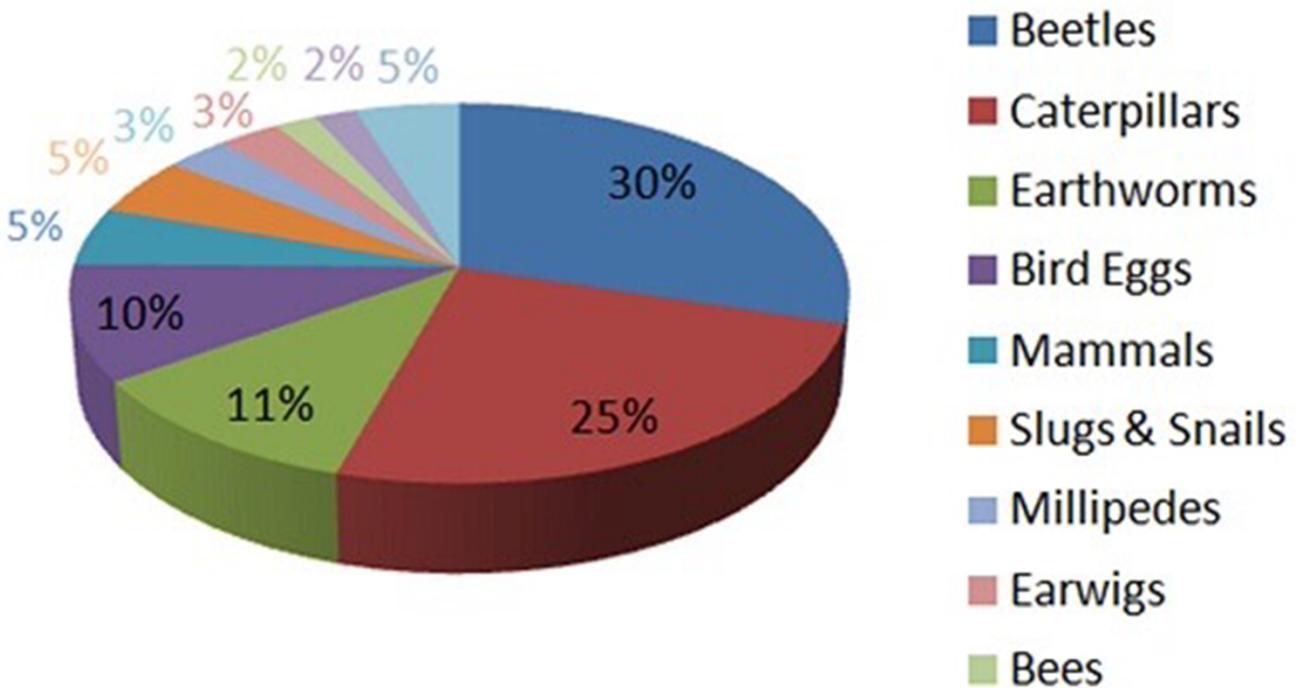
Hedgehogs love to eat Insects, like Snails, Slugs and Beetles.

They also like to nibble on berries, grass roots and Mushrooms.

Sometimes they eat small mice, lizards, frogs and birds eggs.

If they feel daring, they might catch a snake.

They can smell food under 1 inch of soil.



Hibernation



The hibernation period starts in November and ends near Easter time.

The Hedgehog fuel supply comes from the fat store it has built up during the summer.

Food becomes scarce from October.

Hibernation refers to a state of inactivity which means:

They need to weigh at least 450grams or 1lb to survive winter.

Their body temperature drops from 35 to 10

Their heart rate drops from 190 beats per minute to 20.

Predators

The Hedgehog has predators, these are animals that will try to eat the hedgehog.

When a hedgehog curls into a ball, it doesn't move one bit. When I sense they are near, I roll up into a ball and stay very still.

The reason is it will be difficult for a predator to eat it.

It needs to protect its stomach, as this is very sensitive and does not have spines to protect it.

Badgers, Owls and Foxes, even dogs, are some of the animals I watch out for.

But don't worry, I'm pretty tough!



Hedgehogs and Humans

In the UK it has been estimated that up to 15,000 hedgehogs are killed annually on roads.

Pesticides reduce the amount of invertebrates available for the hedgehogs to eat in gardens.

Slug pellets are also thought to impact hedgehogs more directly.



