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## Hedgehogs in your Garden

The hedgehog [more properly known as the European hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus* Linnaeus, 1758)] is probably the UK's most well recognised mammal. There is nothing else like it.

About this time of year hedgehogs are coming out of hibernation and starting to get more active. Besides being busy looking for food, they also turn their attention to breeding, so will be looking for a mate. If you've got the right kind of garden you may be lucky enough to see hedgehogs going about their business.

Because hedgehogs are nocturnal you may not always know they are using your garden, but there are ways to find out. You can put a shallow tray out with sand in and see if you get footprints, or look out for hedgehog poo.

An average garden isn't large enough to supply a hedgehog with enough food. So, it's best if fences have holes in for the hogs to get through to other gardens. You can also help by providing a dish of cat food or special hedgehog food.

If you see a hedgehog, it's good if you can send the information to a local record centre or one of the sites listed. Even dead hedgehogs should be recorded.

- An adult hedgehog can have up to 6, 000 spines
- Each spine has a muscle so it can be flattened or raised.
- Hedgehogs eat a wide variety of food including fruit, worms, slugs, snails, beetles, millipedes and woodlice
- Bread and milk are not good for hedgehogs.
- Hedgehogs shouldn't be kept as pets.
- The name comes from their habit of snorting and grunting, like a pig.
- Hedgehogs tend to live for 2-3 years
- Baby hedgehogs are about 5cm long and born with spines
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This website has lots of information about spotting hedgehogs in your garden

<https://www.hedgehogstreet.org>

## **Local Record Centres**

**LERN (Lancashire Environment Record Network) - for North Lancashire**

<https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/lern/>

**Biobank - for North Merseyside**

<https://www.activenaturalist.org.uk/mbb/record/sighting>

**Greater Manchester Record Centre - for the 10 GM districts**

[https://www.gmwildlife.org.uk/wildlife\\_recording/simple/](https://www.gmwildlife.org.uk/wildlife_recording/simple/)

**RECORD - for Cheshire, Halton, Warrington and Wirral**

<http://www.record-lrc.co.uk/>