



Hedgehog *Over-Wintering* Project

Part of the Freshfields Urban Wildlife Initiative



www.freshfields.org.uk

Who we are...

We are the wildlife team at Freshfields Animal Rescue. Every year, as part of the Freshfields Urban Wildlife Initiative we rescue, rehabilitate and release a steadily rising number of hedgehogs in desperate need of



our help. With the number of admittances running well into triple figures and requests for our intervention often daily, our dedicated team of staff and volunteers work tirelessly for every hog, ensuring that each receives the very best care possible, resulting in the greatest chance of successful rehabilitation and eventual release.

The challenge for hedgehogs...

Hedgehogs are one of the few mammals that are true hibernators. During hibernation hedgehogs are not really asleep, instead they drop their body temperature to match their surroundings and enter a state of torpor. This allows them to save a lot of the vital energy required to see them through those harsh months when food supply's are short, but slows down all other bodily functions making normal activity impossible. While in hibernation the hedgehog's fuel supply comes from the fat stores it has built up over the summer which in the wild will come from foods such as slugs, beetles, caterpillars, snails etc. As the weather becomes colder such food is more difficult to find.



Hedgehogs usually hibernate from October/November time through to March/April with individuals likely to expend additional energy moving nesting sites at least once during this period. During mild winters hedgehogs can remain active well into November and December. Whilst no specific weight will guarantee survival any wild (free-living) hedgehog under 450g is unlikely to survive the winter. For rescue hogs its a more complicated and potentially dangerous story, cosseted whilst in care they put on weight relatively quickly shedding any excess upon release and thus also losing weight more quickly than their free-living counterparts.



About our Over-Wintering Project...

Over-wintering occurs when we have hedgehogs in our care that remain unwell, continue to receive medical treatment or simply do not have sufficient fat reserves to be released by the weather dependent cut-off point of September/October each year. Juveniles arriving with us around September time are also generally over-wintered with us. Most hogs have two litters a year, the first around June/July time and the second August/September, it is this second litter that simply do not have enough time to fatten up before winter arrives. Captive reared, juvenile or rehabilitated hogs cannot be safely released at weights below 500g in Autumn or 600g in very late autumn/early winter.



For the Freshfields team this can mean 75 hedgehogs or more over-wintering with us, each for an average period of 180 days. Each hog must be provided with daily care (cage cleaned, fresh bedding, water and food provided), and also regular veterinary monitoring (hogs are weighed weekly and their progress is charted along with any other medical concerns). These efforts equate to hours of work each and every day and in monetary terms a drain on charity resources of £1 per hog, per day and this before individual medical treatments are taken into consideration!

*In 2016/17 alone we over-wintered 75
hedgehogs at a base cost of £13500!*

Why we do it...

In 2007, the hedgehog with a known ancestry stretching back 15 million years was made a priority conservation species in Britain under the then UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP). 10 years on reports showed a stark contrast between rural and urban populations offering some hope and highlighting a need for greater conservation efforts. With researchers suggesting a species population figure of just 1.5 million hedgehogs across England, Scotland and Wales collectively it remains

vital that hubs for urban wildlife conservation like Freshfields, and the teams that run them, are supported to meet the needs of wildlife locally if this wonderful and unique animal is to survive to frequent gardens and urban green spaces of the future.

Benefits for the hedgehog...

- ✚ Dedicated hedgehog room
- ✚ Onsite vet and surgery
- ✚ 24 hour one-on-one care for hedgehogs that need it
- ✚ Monitored pre-release pens
- ✚ Pre-release veterinary checks
- ✚ Routine worm and de-flea
- ✚ Greater overall success of the hedgehog species locally

In 2017 we successfully released 103 hedgehogs back into the wild, of these 69 hogs (67% of the total number released) had over-wintered with us. As word of our work spreads we can only envisage a higher demand for our intervention and support.

Benefits for you...

The successful rehabilitation of a wild mammal whose unique appearance and proximity in gardens and suburban green spaces places them firmly in the public's affections, one that you can observe close-up and a symbol of our natural heritage.

Areas around towns and villages can be excellent habitats for hedgehogs, and hedgehogs often prefer them over farmland.



How you can help...



You can help us to continue this crucial work - **SPONSOR** a **HEDGEHOG** today!

Your sponsorship, whether one off or regular and in any amount will make such a difference. Complete and return the sponsorship form overleaf or sponsor online at:

<http://bit.do/over-wintering>



- £7 will support a hog for a week!

- £28 will support a hog for a month!

Did You Know?

- ✎ ✎ Hedgehogs are so-called because as they move through hedges looking for worms and insects they make a piggy, grunting noise. Hence, hedge-hog!
- ✎ ✎ Changes in both rural and urban habitat have had a huge effect on the UK's hedgehog population. The destruction of hedgerows, often to extend the size of farmers fields, and use of pesticides has had a devastating effect!
- ✎ ✎ There are fewer gardens bordered by hedges and paving, decking and astroturf are too often favoured over grass. Concrete boundaries prevent hedgehogs moving from garden to garden!
- ✎ ✎ The most common reason hedgehogs are brought in to us is because they have been found out in the day. Hogs are nocturnal so with one exception (female hedgehogs nest building or 'taking a break' during breeding season) will never venture out in the day unless injured or ill.
- ✎ ✎ In 2007 hedgehogs were made a priority conservation species in Britain under the then UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP).
- ✎ ✎ YOU can help hedgehogs in need by **SPONSORING A HEDGEHOG** as part of the Freshfields Over-Wintering Project TODAY!



Freshfields Animal Rescue

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Tel. 0151 931 1604

wildlife@freshfields.org.uk



Charitable Incorporated Organisation 1160348



Sources:

British Hedgehog Preservation Society - Peoples Trust for Endangered Species

Hedgehog Sponsorship Form

Name: (Ms/Miss/Mrs/Mr)
 Address:
 Postcode:..... Telephone:
 Email:

With your permission we would like to send you information about Freshfields news, fundraising activities and events. Please confirm with a tick if you are happy for us to contact you in the following ways:

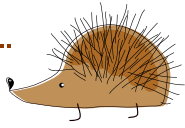
By post By email By telephone

Complete the following section to donate by Direct Debit

YOUR BANK DETAILS

Name of bank / building society:
 Account Number:
 Sort Code:

Sponsorship Amount: £.....



Frequency of donation (Please tick 1):

Once Only Monthly Annually

Signed:..... Date:.....

Payments will be taken on the 15th of each month

For VISA / MASTERCARD payments:

Donation Amount: £.....

Enter you 16 digit card number

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Valid from:

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 Valid to:

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Security number (CSV):

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Signed:

giftaid it • **Boost the value of your donation**
 • **by 25p for every £1 you donate.**

I want to Gift Aid my donation and any donations I make in the future or have made in the past 4 years to Freshfields Animal Rescue. I am a UK taxpayer and understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations in that tax year it is my responsibility to pay any difference.