

Ryston Rachel's Hedgehog Hotel

Rescue , Rehabilitate & Release





Hedgehogs:

**Written and presented
by
Jan Smith**

There are 19 species in five genera of hedgehogs worldwide:

**Erinaceus,
Paraechinus,
Mesechinus,
Atelerix
and
Hemiechinus.**

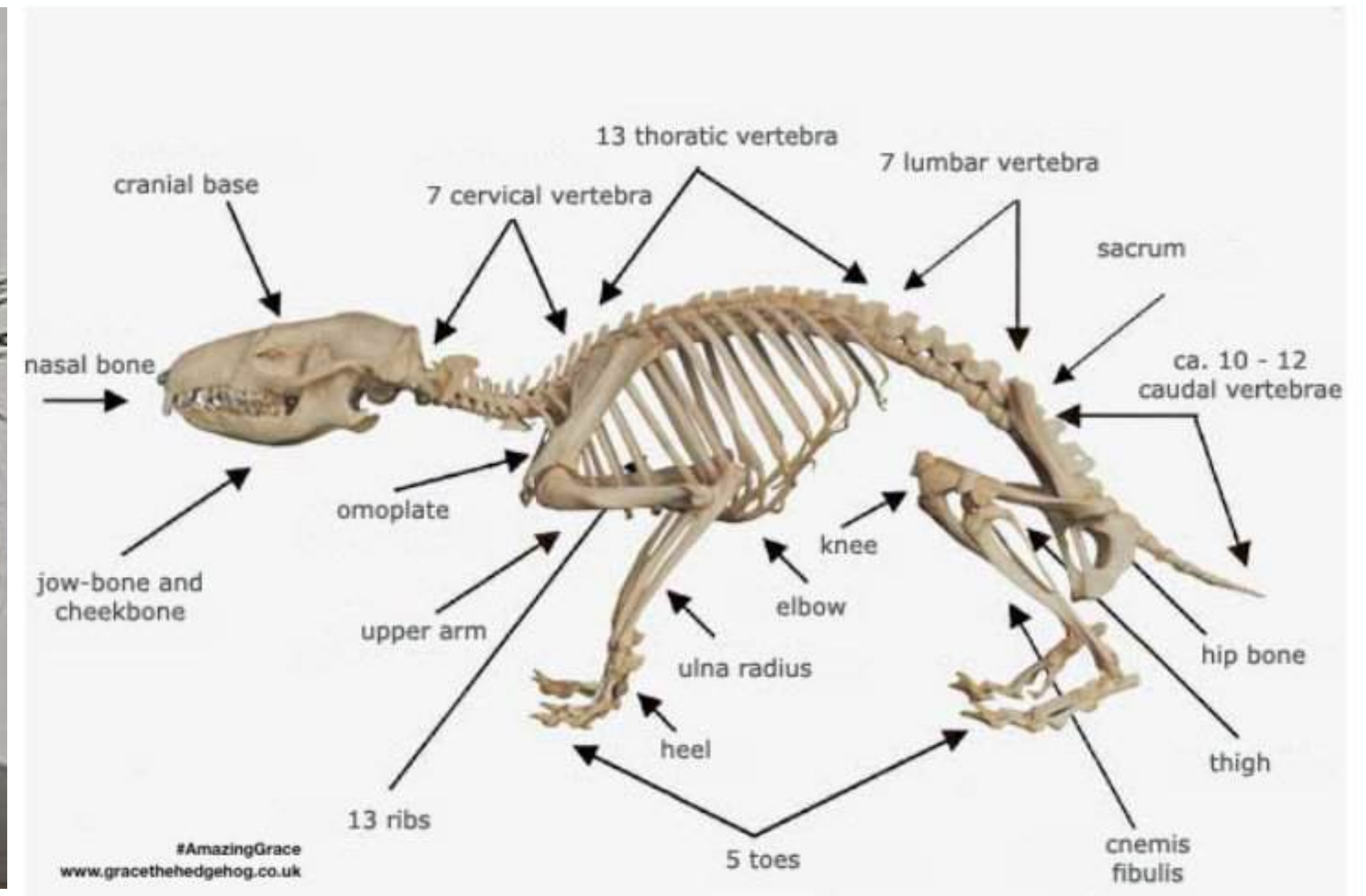
They live across Europe, the Middle East, Africa and Central Asia



Erinaceus europaeus - the British wild hedgehog



Hog skeleton



“Hedgehogs in Britain have undergone a long historic decline, but differences between urban and rural populations are becoming increasingly apparent.

In urban areas, the picture is of a stable population that might be recovering, highlighting the importance of gardens and green spaces, and local action, in ensuring a future for hedgehogs.

In stark contrast, rural populations remain low and, in the last two decades, have continued to decline by between a third and three-quarters nationally. The largest declines are seen in the eastern half of England”.

2011

First State of Britain’s hedgehogs report - highlighted decline based on 10 years of surveys.

2020

Hedgehogs placed on **IUCN Red List as vulnerable to extinction** in the U.K.



Estimated number of UK hedgehogs

1950’s - 30 million

1990’s - 1.5 million

2020 - 879,000

Why?



Environmental factors

Intensive agriculture

Soil quality

Loss of hedgerows

Herbicides

Loss of wide field margins

Pesticides

Mono-cultures

Loss of invertebrates

Loss of permanent pastures

Climate change

Fragmentation of habitat

Predation





Why?



Human factors

Manicured gardens

Enclosed gardens = fragmentation of habitat

Road casualties

Dogs

Netting

Ponds

Garden chemicals

Open drains

Bonfires

LIVING IN THE WILD - basic needs



Ability to roam and find enough
food each night

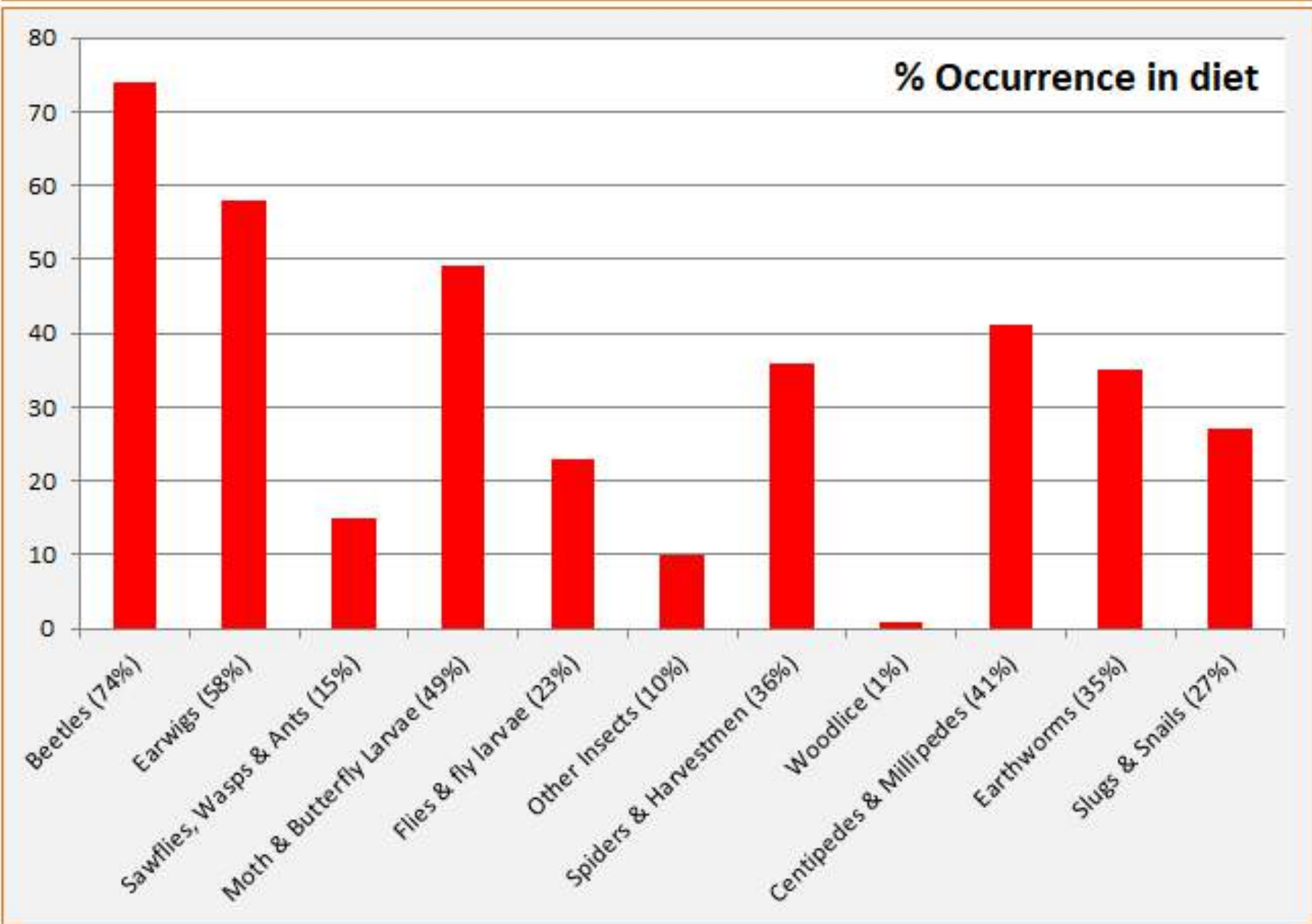
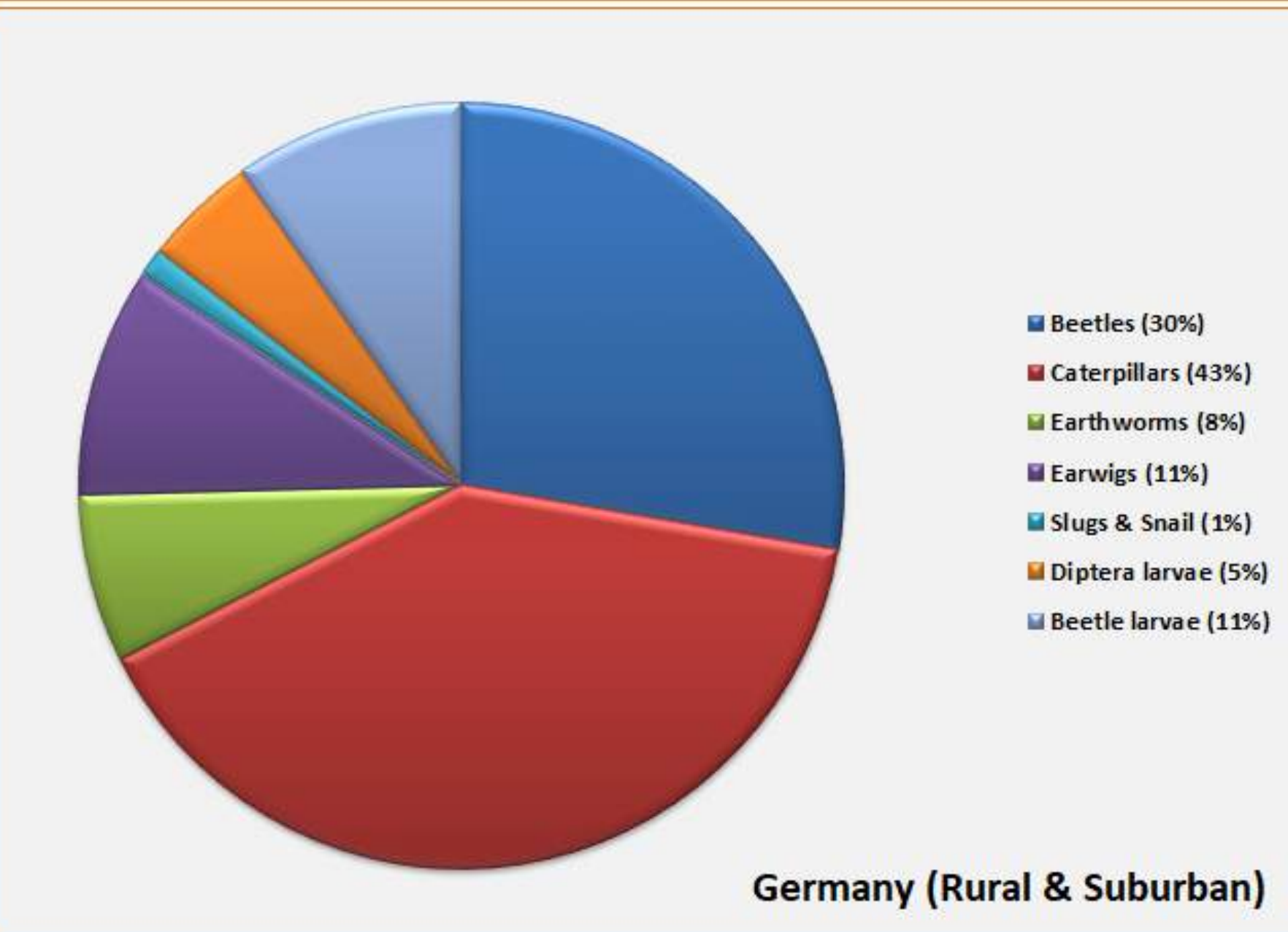
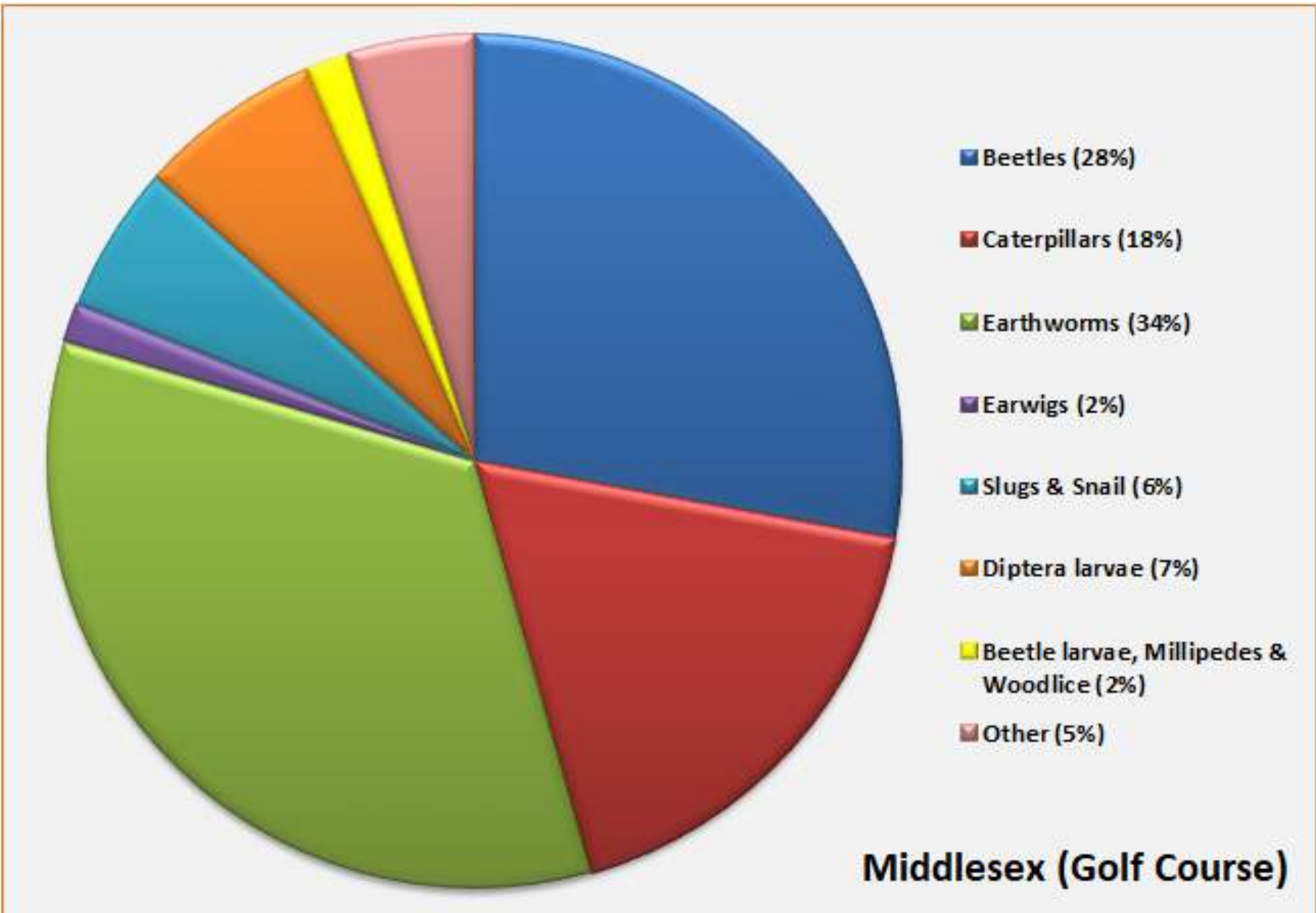
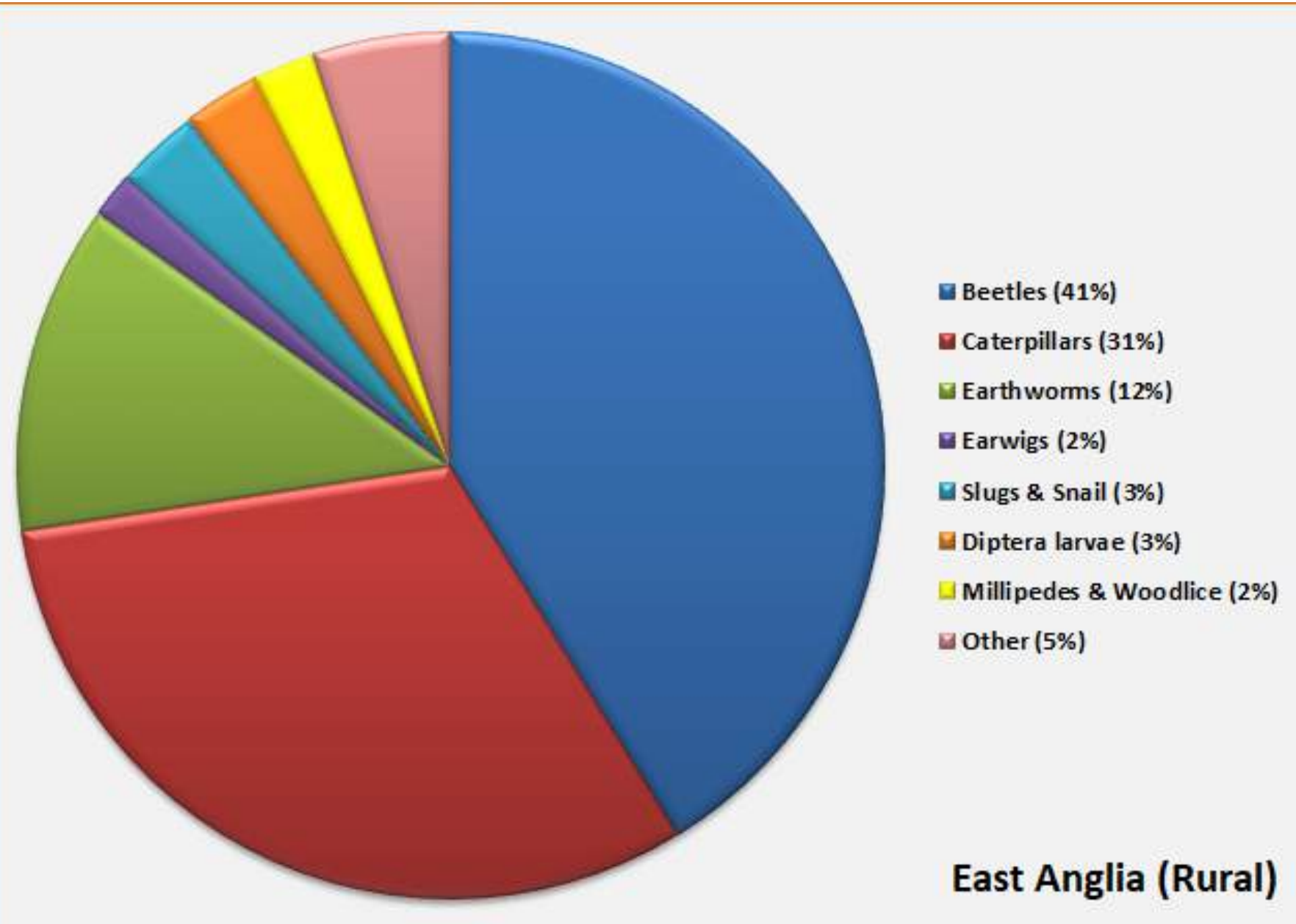
Access to water

Safe places to sleep

DIET IN THE WILD

- Beetles and caterpillars are their preferred food.
- They are scavengers and will eat whatever they can find - needs must.
- They can travel over 2 km a night looking for food.





How manicured gardens effect the food chain



Hedgehog Highways



Food and Water



Pond Escape



Offer Shelter



Natural nests



Hibernation

What is it?

- Torpor - not sleep
- 3-4 hours to wake even from light hibernation
- 12 hours to wake fully

Why hibernate?

- Shortage of food so they need to conserve physiological resources

How? Complex!

- Heart rate reduces from >190 pm to 13 - 20 pm and reduces in strength
- Core skin temperature reduces from 35C to 7C -10C. Core temperature reduces slightly
- Respiration from 50 pm to every 1 or 2 breaths every few minutes with of apnoea <40 mins
- followed by tachypnoea

When?

- Ambient temperature 5C or below
- Reduced availability of food
- Reduction in daylight hours

Weight / body fat needed

- Ideally 600g or more (30% a mix of white and brown fat).

Where?

- Hibernaculum - a dome of 30 - 60cm with walls 10cm thick
- Piles of leaves
- hedgerow
- partially buried in earth

How long?

- October - April? Not any more.

Is it continuous?

- intermittent
- rising temperatures
- weight loss
- moving nests
- disturbance

Waking triggers

- temperatures
- hormones
- fat ratios



Gestation and Development



Pregnancy is around 30 - 40 days

Mum will often be seen out and about in the day searching for nest materials and food - she will be moving with purpose and this is the only exception to the **out in the day is not ok** mantra.



Litters sizes are usually between 5-7 with only 2 -3 surviving to the weaning stage.

The hoglets stay with their mum for around 8 weeks.

If a nest is disturbed early on the mum will sadly eat her young.

Females can have two litters a year.

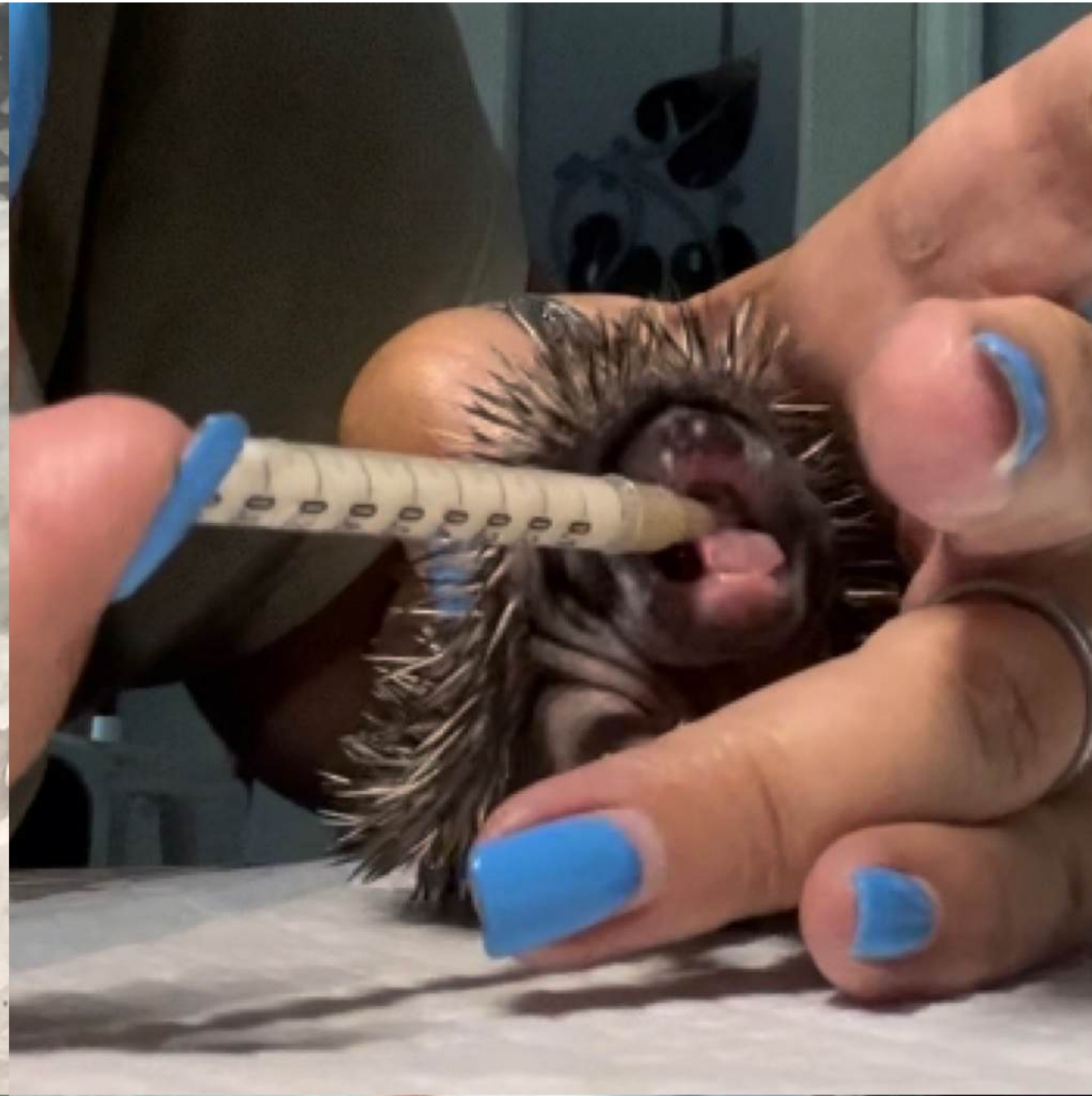
The males play no part in the parenting.

NEWBORN



ONE DAY OLD







ONE WEEK OLD



**TWO
WEEKS
OLD -
eyes
open**



THREE WEEKS OLD - teeth starting to appear



FOUR WEEKS OLD



SIX WEEKS OLD - eating for themselves



EIGHT WEEKS OLD - independent



A quick guide : Hedgehog in need of help?



1) **Adult moving with purpose in summer months – Leave Alone**

Though hedgehogs are nocturnal there are times when they can come out during daylight hours. Pregnant or nursing mothers be out during the day, they will be moving with purpose gathering bedding or seeking food/water.

2) **'Sunbathing' on the Lawn – to a Rescue**

Seeing a hedgehog apparently "sunbathing" out in the open on your lawn means the hog is in serious trouble. Hedgehogs lying out like this are very ill and speedy intervention is vital.

3) **Staggering Around / Wobbling – to a Rescue**

Hogs looking drunk probably have life threatening hypothermia /dehydration and need to be gently warmed up as soon as possible.

Pop it in a box with a wrapped hot water bottle and call for help **urgently**. Don't offer food or water.



4) Dragging one or both legs – ideally straight to a Vet

This hog also needs rescuing but it's one for the vet.

Many vets have relationships with local rescues so will be able to help.

As well as placing the hog carefully in a warm box you could also try offering a little food & water in this case.

5) Coughing – to a Rescue

This could well be a bad case of lungworm which sounds nasty but is easily curable by your local rescue centre. So make contact with them and get the hog to them as soon as possible.

6) Caught in Netting – to a Rescue

Hedgehogs are inquisitive. They will stick their noses into all sorts of things. And if you're covered in long spines, once you've stuck your nose into something it can be tricky to get back out again.

Take the hog and the netting to the rescue . If you have to cut the netting to get the hog free cut as far away from the hog as possible and try to avoid pulling.

Do not release this hog as damage caused by constriction can take hours / days to develop.

7) Hedgehog With Cuts and Missing Spines – to a Rescue

Cuts, flesh wounds and patches of missing spines is likely to have been hit by a car /cut by a strimmer, or attacked by a dog.

Needs taking to a rescue or a vet **urgently**.



8) Hoglets Out in the Daytime – immediately contact local rescue for advice

If you see hoglets out in the day without their mother scoop them up immediately and get them indoors away from flies .

If you have disturbed a nest and the mother has run off cover the hoglets up completely and the mother doesn't come back within an hour or the hoglets start 'squeaking' they will need to be rescued.

Don't be tempted to try to raise baby hedgehogs yourself .

Hoglets are delicate creatures with complicated needs. Their best chance of survival is with the mother. But failing this they will need trained, specialist helpers to survive.



9) Skinny Hog Out in Autumn – contact local rescue for advice

Autumn juvenile hogs, or hogs born later in the summer, may struggle to get to the weight they need to safely hibernate.

A hedgehog needs to be 600 grams to successfully hibernate.

Contact your local rescue centre and seek their advice.

10) Dead Hedgehog?– contact local rescue for advice

If you think you have found a dead hedgehog check very carefully.

Sick or injured hedgehogs can be very cold and still. They may look and feel dead when they are actually still alive with a chance of survival.

Have you disturbed its nest ? Could it be hibernating ?

Put the hedgehog into a box indoors and contact your local rescue.

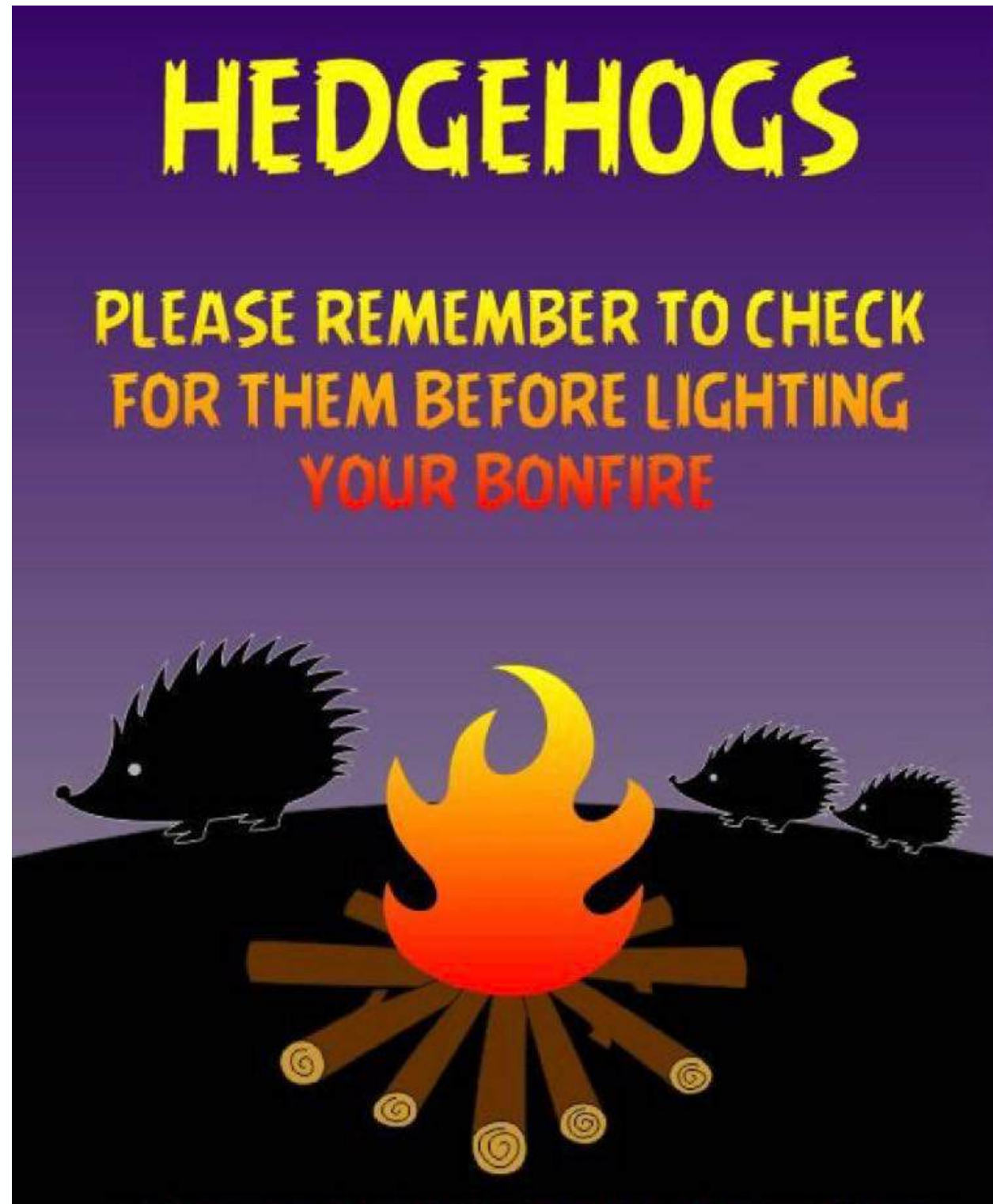
Dehydration & Malnutrition



Flystrike, Ticks & Fleas



Netting, Bonfires and Strimmers



Remember:
Lift it & re-site it
before you light it

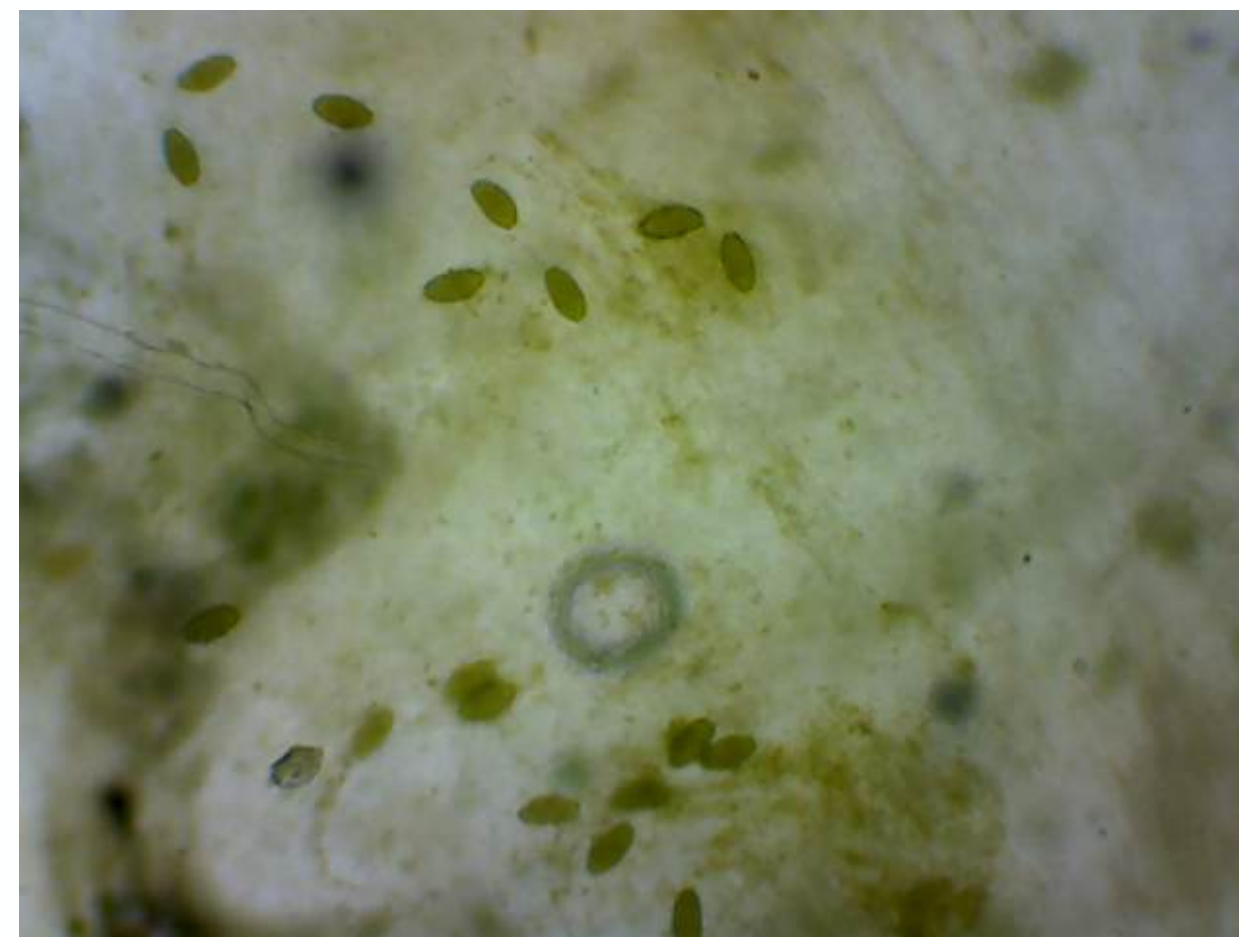


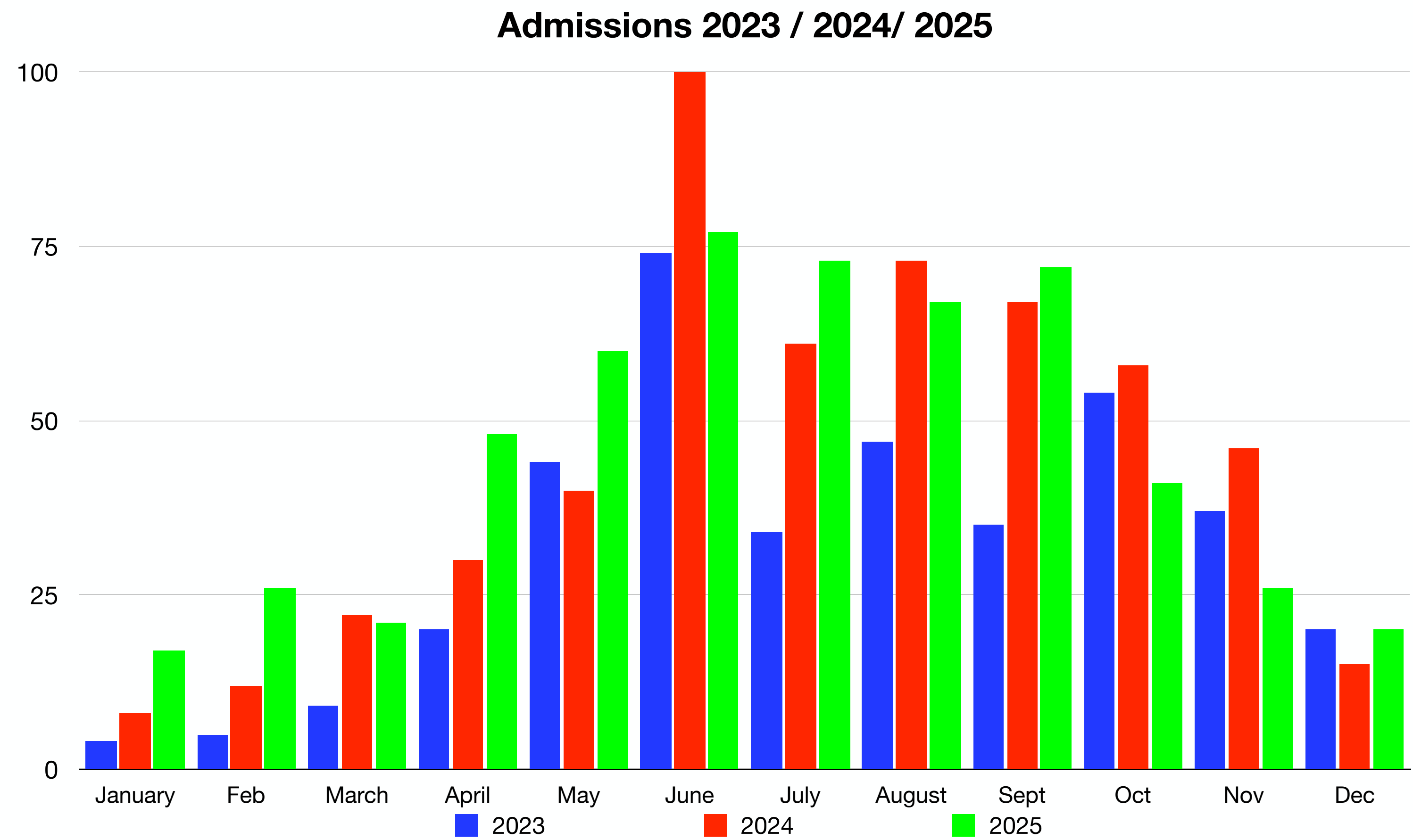
Please lift all netting at
least 6 inches / 15 cm
off the ground

99% of strimmer injuries
result in having the
hedgehog put to sleep.



Microscopic sample checks





Admissions			
	2023	2024	2025
January	4	8	17
Feb	5	12	26
March	9	22	21
April	20	30	48
May	44	40	60
June	74	100	77
July	34	61	73
August	47	73	67
Sept	35	67	72
Oct	54	58	41
Nov	37	46	26
Dec	20	15	20

LAST 8 DAYS OF REPORTED WEIGHTS, DAILY OR WEEKLY CHANGES IN THESE, AND WET OR DRY FOOD GIVEN EACH DAY																																	
10	11-Jan			Change	12-Jan			Change	13-Jan			Change	14-Jan			Change	15-Jan			Change	16-Jan			Change	17-Jan			Change	18-Jan		35		
Current Fosterer	Wet Food	Weight	Dry Food		Wet Food	Weight	Dry Food		Wet Food	Weight	Dry Food		Wet Food	Weight	Dry Food		Wet Food	Weight	Dry Food		Wet Food	Weight	Dry Food		Wet Food	Weight	Dry Food		Wet Food	Weight	Dry Food	Wet Food	Weight
Amy	<input type="checkbox"/>	711	<input type="checkbox"/>	15	<input type="checkbox"/>	726	<input type="checkbox"/>	4	<input type="checkbox"/>	730	<input type="checkbox"/>	32	<input type="checkbox"/>	762	<input type="checkbox"/>	2	<input type="checkbox"/>	764	<input type="checkbox"/>	18	<input type="checkbox"/>	782	<input type="checkbox"/>	7	<input type="checkbox"/>	789	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	COCOPOP		
Amy	<input type="checkbox"/>	456	<input type="checkbox"/>	3	<input type="checkbox"/>	459	<input type="checkbox"/>	9	<input type="checkbox"/>	468	<input type="checkbox"/>	24	<input type="checkbox"/>	492	<input type="checkbox"/>	17	<input type="checkbox"/>	509	<input type="checkbox"/>	7	<input type="checkbox"/>	516	<input type="checkbox"/>	16	<input type="checkbox"/>	532	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	DINAH		
Claire	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	9	<input type="checkbox"/>	671	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	ELFIE		
Claire	<input type="checkbox"/>	1050	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	-5	<input type="checkbox"/>	1045	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	37	<input type="checkbox"/>	1082	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	16	<input type="checkbox"/>	1098	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	6	<input type="checkbox"/>	1104	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	OAKLEY	
Claire	<input type="checkbox"/>	805	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	0	<input type="checkbox"/>	805	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	29	<input type="checkbox"/>	834	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	24	<input type="checkbox"/>	858	<input type="checkbox"/>	0	<input type="checkbox"/>	858	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	10	<input type="checkbox"/>	868	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	<input type="checkbox"/>	869	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	27	<input type="checkbox"/>	896	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	PEBBLES	
Dave & Jo	<input type="checkbox"/>	464	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	0	<input type="checkbox"/>	464	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	33	<input type="checkbox"/>	497	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	-28	<input type="checkbox"/>	469	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	17	<input type="checkbox"/>	486	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	34	<input type="checkbox"/>	520	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	11	<input type="checkbox"/>	531	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	-5	<input type="checkbox"/>	526	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	BUBO	
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Jess	<input type="checkbox"/>	540	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	11	<input type="checkbox"/>	551	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	24	<input type="checkbox"/>	575	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	11	<input type="checkbox"/>	586	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	JAKE		
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Vanda & Colin	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	BOU
Vanda & Colin	<input type="checkbox"/>	500	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	8	<input type="checkbox"/>	508	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	23	<input type="checkbox"/>	531	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	-1	<input type="checkbox"/>	530	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	12	<input type="checkbox"/>	542	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	15	<input type="checkbox"/>	557	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	24	<input type="checkbox"/>	581	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	9	<input type="checkbox"/>	590	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	CHERIE	
Vanda & Colin	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		573	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	COURTNEY
Vanda & Colin	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	DELLA
Vanda & Colin	<input type="checkbox"/>	570	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	30	<input type="checkbox"/>	600	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	7	<input type="checkbox"/>	607	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	28	<input type="checkbox"/>	635	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	18	<input type="checkbox"/>	653	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	-3	<input type="checkbox"/>	650	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	HENNI
Vanda & Colin	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	MISTLETOE
Vanda & Colin	<input type="checkbox"/>	530	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	-5	<input type="checkbox"/>	525	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	44	<input type="checkbox"/>	569	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1	<input type="checkbox"/>	570	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	67	<input type="checkbox"/>	637	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	-32	<input type="checkbox"/>	605	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	23	<input type="checkbox"/>	628	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	26	<input type="checkbox"/>	654	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NORA	
Vanda & Colin	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	-14	<input type="checkbox"/>	820	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	-26	<input type="checkbox"/>	794	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	-16	<input type="checkbox"/>	778	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	-10	<input type="checkbox"/>	768	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	-5	<input type="checkbox"/>	763	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	3	<input type="checkbox"/>	766	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	PHYLLIS	

	OCCUPIED ACCOMMODATION																	
	ADMITTED	PORTABLE INCUBATOR TLC 30	INCUBATOR TLC 40	INCUBATOR TLC 50	INDOORS – OCCUPIED UNITS – WITH HEAT PAD		INDOORS – OCCUPIED UNITS – WITHOUT HEAT PAD				MINIMUM WEIGHT FOR TRANSFER TO HUTCH	OUTSIDE – OCCUPIED HUTCHES	OUTSIDE – OCCUPIED HUTCHES – HIBERNATING		OUTSIDE – OCCUPIED HUTCHES – READY FOR RELEASE	MINIMUM WEIGHT FOR RELEASE	RELEASED	DECEASED
CURRENT VALUE											550 g					650 g		
TRIAGE																		
RACHEL (Downham)					GAYNOR	MOTTEUX	KARI	MABEL	NEVE			BIG AL		YOGI				
RACHAEL (Berrington)					MAVERICK		ADZUKI	MISTA	MR ELF	PRETZEL				LITTLE MO				
TRACY (South Wootton)																		
VANDA & COLIN (Colkirk)							CHERIE	NORA	PHYLLIS			COURTNEY	HENNI	BOU	DELLA	MISTLETOE		
ANY MEDICATION																		
AMY						DINAH						COCOPOP						
ANGELA (Wisbech)																		
CATHERINE (Tittleshall)																		
CLAIRE (Downham)							OAKLEY	PEBBLES				ELFIE						
DAVE & JO (Swaffham)							BUBO											
JAN (Fitcham)																		
JANE (Downham)							ECHO	MCQUEEN					CASEY					
LIZ (South Wootton)																		
MAGGIE (Dereham)																		
ONLY ORAL MEDICATION																		
ANNETTE (Magdalen)																		
LISA (Heacham)																		
VICKI (Downham)																		
NO MEDICATION																		
CAROL (Dersingham)																		
CAZ (Wotton)																		
JACKY (Upwell)													BLUESTONE					
JESS (Wisbech)					TIMOTHY							JAKE	AGARY					
JILLY (Snettisham)																		
JOY (Heacham)																		
LOUISE (Heacham)																		
LOVEDAY (Gorston)																		
LYNN & ALAN (Wimbotsham)																		
NATALIE (Fakenham)																		
SARAH													PINTO					
ROARRI																		

2025 stats

In total as a team we admitted **548** hedgehogs.

We have successfully fixed up and released **338**

We have **30** still in our care.

Stats wise here come the figures: Male **255** Female **293**

Died - **133** (**60** of which died within 24 hours)

Euthanasia at vets - **38**

Dead on arrival at hotel - **9**

Assuming the 30 still in care are all successfully released once the weather allows (as they are expected to) this would mean a success rate of 67% up from 60% last year.

Average time in our care 42.4 days down from 51.9 in 2024

Average spend per patient: £51



How you can help hedgehogs:

- Make a hole : Hedgehogs roam up to 2 miles a night therefore it is so important to give hedgehogs the space they need by making sure we put a 13 x 13cm hole in fences and walls.
- Make ponds and drains safe. Hedgehogs are great swimmers and climbers, but they cannot climb out of steep-sided ponds, pools or deep holes. Cover up drains and holes.
- Create a wild corner. Let wild plants grow in a corner of your garden. Hedgehogs may build a nest there, plus it would make a great food source.
- Put out food and water. Hedgehogs really appreciate us supplementing their natural diets! Meaty cat or dog wet food or cat biscuits are ideal. **Avoid mealworms, peanuts, suet and milk.** Always make fresh water available in shallow dishes.
- Always check before strimming.
- Always check bonfires before lighting.
- Hedgehogs are nocturnal so remember :



OUT IN THE DAY MEANS NOT OK

