



Hedgehog Rescue NEWSLETTER

Summer
2021



MESSAGE FROM YVONNE

We have had an exceptionally busy year so far with almost 270 hedgehogs through the door and the busiest months are still ahead. We are in the "aaahh" season, with lots of small hoglets coming in. Our volunteers spend a lot of time cooing at their cuteness, and taking photos for our website and social media platforms. Some of the smaller babies are fostered out, as two-hourly feeds take up a lot of your day.

I have started to give talks again in the playground where there is lots of fresh air and some social distancing. The children have been so excited about my visits and I love seeing their faces, pictures of surprise and delight, when they lay their eyes on a hedgehog. In these moments I often think back to when I was a child and seeing a wild hedgehog was extremely common. Now I meet adults who have never seen one, and it's sad to think that, if the population continues to decline, seeing a wild hedgehog may be a thing of the past. It's so important that we all become Hedgehog Champions with 'Hedgehog Street' and get communities involved in cutting holes in fences and leaving out food.

The sun has well and truly got his hat on! While this is great for us humans, wildlife are struggling. Food and water becomes scarce, so please remember to keep water dishes topped up and put out food to help our hogs along their way!

LASTING LEGACIES

Three wonderful supporters of Hedgehog Rescue recently passed away. They were all kind enough to leave money in their will, dedicated to Hedgehog Rescue, and it has really helped with this year's funding. We can't thank them enough and appreciate every donation!

Yvonne

JUST SOME OF HEDGEHOG RESCUE'S PATIENTS...



HERBERT

While going about his business, Herbert suffered an attack by a dog in somebody's garden. After being stitched up by the vet and beginning to recover, he then developed ringworm. We treated this cheeky hog at Hedgehog Rescue until he made a full recovery and was ready for release. Our volunteer Caroline released him into her garden as a safe introduction back to life in the wild.



CASSIE

Cassie and her hoglets were nesting under a school when disturbed, resulting in Cassie running away. Luckily she returned to her babies, and all were brought into us. She stopped feeding due to stress and one baby died but the remaining hoglets, Sugar and Spice, were taken in by our volunteer Sarah. Cassie is doing well in the hospital and preparing for release, while her babies are growing up nicely in Sarah's home.



SARAH

Poor Sarah was brought into Hedgehog Rescue after she was found in a garden tangled in netting.

She was put on Metacam for five days, to help to reduce any inflammation and pain that had been caused by the tight netting.

Now weighing 959g this fully grown hog is ready for release.



HOG OF THE MONTH : GNASHER

On the 25th of May, a female hedgehog arrived at the hospital. She was found in the daytime wandering in circles and with her back leg missing. She also had apparent chest issues and was immediately put on medication and nebulised.

To begin with, she was extremely fractious, always running around her pen, covered in food and mess, causing her paws and stump to get very sore and bleed. To help with this, she received daily baths, E10 ointment on her paws, along with painkillers. Although she was quite a snappy hog, always biting your gloves when being handled, she soon became a favourite of all the volunteers due to her quirky character. Our volunteer Caroline aptly named her 'Gnasher'.

On the 22nd of June, Gnasher was taken to the vet to have her injured stump properly amputated, while there, she gave birth! Sadly, her maternal instincts did not kick in and the hoglets almost died. She was separated from the hoglets so they could be looked after and Gnasher returned to the vet for a week's worth of antibiotics and painkillers. She returned a week later to finally have her injured leg amputated. After the operation, she stopped biting but was still restless, making her paws bleed, so I took her home on the 13th of



July for rehabilitation. I was initially hoping that she could join our other hog Max in his enclosed garden. It quickly became apparent she was not suitable for the family as she was out in the daytime a lot and would fall asleep in random places.

Gnasher started hydrotherapy in the bath but would only swim in tight circles. Even when walking in the garden, she kept going in circles - until she discovered our tortoises. She began following them around the garden and walking in straight lines! It was so heart-warming to watch. After keeping her inside for a few nights so her paws could heal, we thought it best

for her well-being to socially integrate her with our tortoises and other disabled hogs.

Gnasher has yet to work out how to use the feeding house, so is fed on demand when she comes out of her bed. She's still going around in circles a lot of the time and causes havoc in the pen by removing the bedding out of the hog house. Sadly, I do not think she will make any further improvements, so she needs a suitable new garden and an owner who has the time and patience to cater to her needs. Until then, we will continue to foster and dote upon this lovable and unique hog.

Karen





HEATWAVES AND HEDGEHOGS

The weather has been really heating up, and it seems as though it's only going to get hotter as summer progresses.

As we all enjoy some sunshine and trips to the beach, much wildlife throughout the UK is struggling. The heat dries the soil, resulting in a scarcity of food for a multitude of species.

Hedgehogs feed on beetles, earthworms, and other invertebrates, by digging through the earth with their long snouts and adept claws. As the weather warms, these creepy crawlies dig deeper into colder and damper soil, making it harder for the hedgehogs to find a meal. Many rescue centres up and down the country will see an increase in skinny, dehydrated hogs due to lack of access to water and food.

HELP A HOG OUT

As we bask in this weather we can also help our prickly friends survive this difficult time.

MOST IMPORTANTLY PROVIDE WATER! Hedgehogs roam far and wide looking for food and during the heat and will become extremely dehydrated and tired. Leave out a bowl of water or create a shallow pond with easy exit routes for wildlife.

Creating a pond will not only benefit hedgehogs, birds and amphibians during summer, but will provide an important habitat all year round, encouraging a plethora of wildlife back into your garden.

THROW SOME SHADE! Resist the urge to tidy and create a wild patch with lots of leafy cover to protect wildlife, including hedgehogs, against the harsh daytime sun. A log pile is also a brilliant place for amphibians to hide and insects to thrive, providing vital meals for frogs, birds and hedgehogs alike.

Find out how to make a wildlife friendly garden in our previous newsletter.

FILL THEIR BELLIES! Many hedgehogs, including hoglets born in June and July, will struggle to survive these hot summer months due to scarcity of food. Remember to leave out cat, dog or speciality hedgehog food to help to keep these hogs happy and healthy. *Please remember to never give hedgehogs milk as it makes them sick.*

WATER YOUR PLANTS! Keeping your plants well-watered will ensure flowers can keep providing nectar, helping bees and other important insects to carry out essential pollinating. Watering will also keep the soil moist, making it easier for hedgehogs to dig for grubs buried deep in the earth.

By remembering to do these little things throughout summer you'll not only help our decreasing hedgehog population to survive but also a whole host of important British wildlife also struggling throughout summertime.





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IT'S HOGLET SEASON

Hedgehogs begin to give birth in June and July, with some starting earlier in May, with an average of five in a litter.

Hoglets are extremely vulnerable when they are born with no visible spines, completely blind, and at risk of abandonment by their mother if she is disturbed.



IT'S HARD BEING A HOGLET

If a nest is disturbed when the hoglets are first born, a mother may abandon or even eat her young. So if you hear of a nest or have one in your garden, resist checking it and leave them be. If the nest needs to be moved, wait until the hogs are a little older as the mother may move them to a new nest if disturbed.

Hedgehogs are prey animals for many British predators, from badgers and foxes to predatory birds and pets. This may result in the hoglets being orphaned or becoming prey themselves. When you have pets, please keep an eye on them if you know there is a nest around as they can cause injury or even kills hogs, especially hoglets.

Around four weeks old, hoglets join their mother on her excursions to find food, learning all the essential life skills that help hedgehogs survive to adulthood. Here they are at risk of being separated from their mother or becoming prey for another animal.

During the summer months, it becomes harder to find food as the soil dries up and insects burrow deeper. With insufficient food, mothers aren't able to produce enough milk for her babies.

*Harriet with her 18 day old hogs
Bandito and Bambino.*



WHAT YOU CAN DO

- If you find a nest, leave it alone and make sure it's safe from inquisitive pets and other disturbances.
- Garden with caution by checking for hogs in the undergrowth before mowing or strimming the lawn.
- Remove any unnecessary netting for fruits and vegetables, and sports nets such as football goals, as hedgehogs can become entangled, injured, or vulnerable to predators when stuck.
- Leave food and water out, particularly on hot days, to ensure the mother hog can get enough food for herself to produce milk for the growing hoglets.
- Keep your ears and eyes peeled for distressed hoglets. They let out a shrill squeal like a bird and it could mean they have been abandoned or lost.

Call your local hedgehog rescue if you come across a hoglet or hog in need as they will require specialist care.



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IT'S RAINING HOGS & DOGS

Since the pandemic began, many people have had more time on their hands and decided to buy a pet, particularly dogs. At Hedgehog Rescue, time and time again, we have hedgehogs coming to us with injuries from dog attacks, which can often be life-threatening. Large adults hedgehogs can usually protect themselves with their spines but, younger and smaller hogs are more at risk of severe injury.

Hedgehogs tend to have a routine when coming out in the evening, so if you are aware of a hog in your area, make sure to check before letting your dog outside in the evening. Turning on the outside light a few minutes before letting the dog out signals to the hogs that they should seek safe shelter.

When taking a dog for an evening walk or final stroll of the garden, either keep them on a lead if you know they are prone to attacking wildlife or supervise them to prevent any attacks if you know there is a hedgehog about.

Be particularly vigilant during nesting and hoglet season April - July to avoid disturbance of mothers and babies.

WHEN DOGS ATTACK

Dog's long canines bite deep into hedgehogs however, these seal over quickly and can seem as if they're healing. This can lead to infection and abscesses which can affect the hog more than the bite itself.

If your dog attacks or picks up a hog on a walk or in the garden, it is best to contact a rescue centre straight away, even if the injury does not look severe on the surface.

Hedgehogs are also attacked by wild animals, like foxes, who see them as prey. These types of attacks can be prevented, by providing hogs safe places to eat and nest in your garden.

If you see a hedgehog out in the day or wounded in any way, then contact your nearest rescue centre.

BEWARE THE ROBOT LAWN-MOWER

We all know mowing the lawn can be a bit tedious and here at Hedgehog Rescue, we love to promote a more wild and untamed garden filled with colour and life. But there has been some concern from hedgehog lovers, as automatic lawnmowers are becoming more commonplace as an alternative way to tame our gardens.

To find out how it's impacting our local hogs, The British Hedgehog Preservation Society has sponsored researcher Dr. Sophie Lund Rasmussen from the University of Oxford to find out exactly the type of injuries these lawnmowers can cause. (No hedgehogs were harmed in this research).

Her data found that some can cause life-threatening injuries to our prickly friends, but some only cause a bump on the head and a bruise. She discovered that mowers with retractable blades and front-wheel drive were safer.

Using this research Dr. Rasmussen and The British Hedgehog Preservation Society aim to work alongside manufacturers to give hedgehog-friendly badges to safer lawn mowers, making them easier for shoppers to identify.

Nevertheless, always check, and then check again, any overgrowth and grass before you begin mowing and strimming because there may be a hedgehog nesting or using it as a shelter.

