

Hedgehogs in Wales

Hedgehogs do not seem to be especially common in this area – for example, we have only had two sightings in the garden in ten years. I don't know whether this is a new thing or whether it has always been like that. You would think that with a plentiful supply of slugs and snails and not too many roads to cross they would thrive here. There is a theory that numbers are kept low by badgers, whose powerful jaws are not put off by all those spines, and that hedgehogs are rare where badgers are common. This seems plausible but this theory has not been proved as far as I know.



In many areas of the UK where badgers are not so common, hedgehog numbers have declined by about 50% in the recent past. It is not clear why this should be – the increase in cars and traffic may be one reason so research is in progress to find out what is going on.

Anyway, back to hedgehogs in Wales. There is currently a Wales-wide hedgehog survey being undertaken by the Mammal Society. They need your help in locating these charismatic creatures as records are very thin on the ground and nobody really knows if they are actually rare or just rarely reported. Any sightings should be passed on to the Project Officer, Becky at r.clews-roberts@themammalsociety.org.

There is also the option of getting involved further by undertaking a footprint tunnel survey. Details of this can be found online at: http://www.mammal.org.uk/mamonet_wales.

Footnote: I had a phone call recently from a resident of Herbrandston who wanted to know what the attractive little bird was that was running around the car park on the Herbrandston side of Sandy Haven. Well, I think it was a Ringed Plover. This dapper little bird with its orange legs is more usually seen on beaches in small groups, often at the edge of the water, but they sometime venture further afield if there is food to be had. There are always small numbers spending the winter in the Cleddau Estuary, and in the summer they will head north to breed on the beaches of Scotland and Scandinavia.

