



people's  
trust for  
endangered  
species



## Guidance on small mammal road sign placement

### Background

A new road sign has been released to remind drivers to look out for small mammals on our roads. According to Department for Transport figures, hundreds of people are injured each year in collisions involving animals in the road. The sign, which warns road users of hazards due to animals in the road ahead, could be placed in areas where accident rates are highest.



While the sign features a picture of a hedgehog, it is designed to warn drivers to be careful of all small mammals. Existing warning signs include smaller animals such as migratory toads and wildfowl, and large animals such as deer and livestock. This small mammal sign serves to complement existing signage.



Hedgehogs have been classified as 'vulnerable to extinction' on the UK's conservation Red List and roadkill is a contributing factor to hedgehog declines over recent years. *The State of Britain's Hedgehogs 2018* (SOBH) report revealed that hedgehogs in rural areas are in severe decline, with their numbers plummeting by half since the millennium. The report also showed that although hedgehogs have declined by a third in urban areas since 2000, the rate of decline is slowing. Hedgehog roadkill is an issue in both rural and suburban areas.

Raising awareness and mitigating for this danger is therefore extremely important in conserving this beloved and threatened part of UK wildlife.

More information about the small mammal road sign can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-road-sign-to-improve-road-safety-and-protect-animals>.

### Small mammal road sign placement

Hedgehogs are particularly prone to roadkill, and based on research funded by People's Trust for Endangered Species (PTES), British Hedgehog Preservation Society (BHPS) and The Mammal Society, it is suggested that the following factors are considered in positioning these road signs:

- The primary purpose of the sign is to raise awareness of small mammals on roads so their placement anywhere is useful.
- There's a higher probability of hedgehog roadkill on suburban edges of cities and in towns and villages.
- Casualties peak in the summer months so a pop-up seasonal sign between April and October might be effective in checking speed.
- Local records centres and the NBN Atlas online have useful records on small mammals, including the roadkill data sources listed below.



British Hedgehog  
Preservation Society

people's  
trust for  
endangered  
species

**HEDGEHOG  
STREET**



**CITY OF WILDLIFE**

- Currently roadkill records are widespread but sporadic so it is unclear if hotspots exist or rather just types of habitat where hedgehogs are more likely to exist and roam.

Hedgehog roadkill hotspots: <https://www.mammal.org.uk/science-research/hedgehog-hotspots/>

### Roadkill research: Driving hedgehogs to extinction

A recent research project carried out at the University of Sussex looked at whether there are particular factors that make some roads deadlier than others for hedgehogs. The key findings were as follows:

- 9% of the 400,000km of road in Britain was found to be particularly dangerous for hedgehogs. Higher numbers of dead hedgehogs were found in several areas including central Britain, southern Wales, and the Scottish Central Belt.
- Areas associated with a higher probability of roadkill were **urban and grassland**, with the highest danger being on the **suburban edges of large cities** and throughout **small towns and villages**.
- Numbers of casualties were found to rise steadily during the year, reaching a peak in July, before declining to their lowest in winter, when hedgehogs are less active and mostly hibernating.

A summary of this study can be found here: <https://www.hedgehogstreet.org/driving-hedgehogs-to-extinction/>.

### Further research on hedgehogs and roads

A project being undertaken by Nottingham Trent University PhD student Lauren Moore aims to determine what impacts roads are having on hedgehog populations. The study will examine which individuals are most at risk of being killed or injured on roads, as well as whether mitigation such as tunnels under roads are effective at reducing the risk.

More information on this research can be found here: <https://ptes.org/grants/uk-mammal-projects/how-are-roads-impacting-our-hedgehogs/>.

### Roadkill data sources

Records of roadkill across the UK are gathered through:

- PTES' *Mammals on Roads* survey: <https://ptes.org/all-about-the-mammals-on-roads-survey/>
- Hedgehog Street's BIG Hedgehog Map: <https://bighedgehogmap.org/>
- Cardiff University's Project Splatter: <https://projectsplatter.co.uk/>
- The Mammal Society's Mammal Tracker app: <https://www.mammal.org.uk/volunteering/mammal-mapper/>



British Hedgehog  
Preservation Society

people's  
trust for  
endangered  
species

**HEDGEHOG  
STREET** 

**CITY OF WILDLIFE**

## Notes

### About Hedgehogs

- Hedgehogs are in trouble. *The State of Britain's Hedgehogs 2018 (SOBH)* is the only comprehensive review of the status of Britain's hedgehogs. This report revealed that hedgehogs are in severe decline, with their numbers plummeting by half in rural areas and a third in urban areas since the millennium.
- Multiple factors are causing this decline. They are complex, and include: loss of hedgerows and permanent grasslands; the intensification of agriculture and larger field sizes; and the use of pesticides. Urban and suburban areas are becoming increasingly important for hedgehogs, but the move towards tidy, sterile gardens isolated from one another by impermeable boundaries has also contributed to their demise.
- But, there are lots of ways to help hedgehogs! Make a small hole in your fence to connect your garden with your neighbours; leave patches of nesting materials such as leaves and twigs, or provide a hedgehog house; put out supplementary food and water; record all sightings (alive and dead) on the BIG Hedgehog Map; and become a Hedgehog Champion.
- More research is being funded by BHPS & PTES. A range of academic research projects are currently being carried out, aiming to further scientific understanding about the causes for the decline and most importantly what can be done to reverse this threat to this iconic species.
- In 2015, PTES and BHPS launched a 10-year species conservation strategy at the first UK summit on hedgehogs in a decade.
- Hedgehogs are 'Britain's Favourite Mammal', according to the 2016 Royal Society of Biology poll.

### About Hedgehog Street

- Hedgehog Street is a joint campaign by wildlife charities: the British Hedgehog Preservation Society (BHPS) and People's Trust for Endangered Species (PTES). It's an ongoing project which was launched in June 2011 and encourages people to make small changes in their own gardens, which will make a big difference for hedgehogs. To date, over 80,000 volunteer "Hedgehog Champions" up and down the country have registered to help, but we always need more volunteers!
- Hedgehog Street is working with The Rt Hon Chris Grayling, MP for Epsom & Ewell who is the Species Champion for the UK's native hedgehog.
- The free Hedgehog Street app was launched in January 2020 and is available from the App Store or Google Play.
- Hedgehog Street is also liaising with [farmers or rural landowners](#), [housing developers](#) and [greenspace land managers](#), to help better manage their land to support wild hedgehog populations.
- The charities' *Hedgehog Street* garden won Gold at the 2014 RHS Hampton Court Palace Flower Show and People's Choice Award in the summer garden category.
- Visit [www.hedgehogstreet.org](http://www.hedgehogstreet.org) for more information.

### About BHPS

- [BHPS](#) is a UK charity founded in 1982 dedicated to helping & protecting hedgehogs native to the UK. They run a helpline offering advice on caring for & encouraging hedgehogs in the wild and in gardens. They aim to educate the public on how best to help hedgehogs and fund research into the behavioural habits of hedgehogs to ascertain the best methods of assisting their survival.
- Visit [www.britishhedgehogs.org.uk/](http://www.britishhedgehogs.org.uk/) and follow BHPS on [Facebook](#) or [Twitter](#).



**British Hedgehog  
Preservation Society**

people's  
trust for  
endangered  
species

**HEDGEHOG  
STREET**



**CITY OF WILDLIFE**

### About PTES

- [PTES](https://www.ptes.org), a UK conservation charity created in 1977, is ensuring a future for endangered species throughout the world. We protect some of our most threatened wildlife species and habitats, and provide practical conservation support through research, grant-aid, educational programmes, wildlife surveys, publications and public events.
- PTES' current priority species and habitats include hazel dormice, hedgehogs, water voles, noble chafers, stag beetles, traditional orchards, native woodlands, wood pasture and parkland and hedgerows.
- PTES has *Species Champions* for three of its priority species: for hedgehogs The Rt Hon Chris Grayling, MP for Epsom & Ewell, for water voles The Rt Hon Hilary Benn, MP for Leeds Central and Chair of the Brexit Select Committee, and for dormice The Rt Hon Matt Hancock, MP for West Suffolk and Secretary of State for Health and Social Care.
- Visit [www.ptes.org](https://www.ptes.org) and follow PTES on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), [YouTube](#) & [LinkedIn](#).