

2014 National Hedgehog Survey update

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University of
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British Hedgehog
Preservation Society

The first year of the National Hedgehog Survey is now finished, with a total of 82 sites surveyed (see Map 1). We would like to say a MASSIVE thank you to everyone who helped this year and to those of you who said you'll help next year. This survey could not happen without you and we truly appreciate all your hard work.

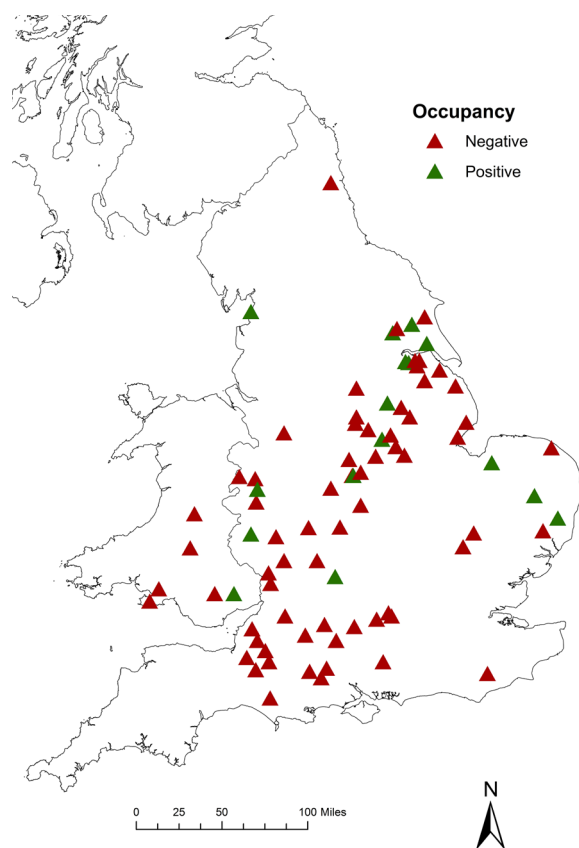
Your help is already allowing us to see where hedgehogs are still present in rural areas and, just as importantly, where it appears they are now absent. By the end of the survey we'll have a good understanding of the distribution of hedgehogs in rural areas and the factors affecting their

presence or absence. We'll also have established a baseline of occupancy against which future changes can be measured.

Of the 82 sites surveyed, 51 were surveyed by volunteers and 31 by students at Nottingham Trent University, the University of Reading and Hartpury College. Only 16 (20%) were found to have hedgehogs present. Despite this sounding rather low, the survey is looking at sites in all the different land classes in England and Wales, even those we think aren't ideal for hedgehogs. This is so we can be confident that we can identify which habitats really are best for hedgehogs.

Encouragingly the detection rate (the probability of finding hedgehogs on any given day where they are present) is much higher than we expected. In addition quite a number of positive sites were in one of the intensively farmed arable land classes, perhaps indicating that hedgehogs use arable habitats more than previously supposed.

Humberside had the highest total number of sites surveyed, with ten sites covered (table 1). However, Somerset and Wiltshire were the top two counties for the numbers of sites surveyed by volunteers, with six each – so congratulations to Wiltshire and Somerset!



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Emily Thomas

Rank	County	Total number of sites surveyed (number in brackets surveyed by volunteers)
1	Humberside	10 (4)
2	Lincolnshire	7 (0)
3	Somerset	6 (6)
3	Wiltshire	6 (6)
3	Nottinghamshire	6 (1)

Map 1. The distribution of all sites surveyed in 2014, indicating whether hedgehogs were present or absent.
Table 1. Top five counties for number of sites surveyed in 2014.

Our plan for next year...

We plan to start the survey season next year at the beginning of May. If the winter/spring is mild however, then the surveys can start in April (dependent on hedgehogs being out of hibernation). We'll let you know next spring when surveying can start.

For next year's survey we have decided to increase the number of available sites to the full 1,600 sites that were covered during the National Badger Set Survey. This will mean that we will be able to allocate sites that are as close to you as possible to minimise travel time, as we do realise that the survey protocol is time consuming.

So far 134 sites are confirmed to be surveyed in 2015 across 40 counties which is fantastic. Hopefully this number will continue to grow over the winter months. We'd like to survey as many sites as possible next year, so if you do know of anyone else who would be happy to take part please ask them to get in touch,

with their postcode, by emailing hedgehogsurvey@ptes.org

Comments/Feedback

We have already had some really useful feedback about the survey which we can use to improve it next year. For example, the volunteer handbook has been updated with full-sized examples of hedgehog and other species' footprints in Appendix 5; this should make it easier to identify any footprints you get. We'll be emailing out the updated handbook before the survey season starts next spring or you can download a copy now at www.ptes.org/nhshandbook

Please continue to let us know if you think of anything that can be improved by emailing hedgehogsurvey@ptes.org

Finally we would like to say a huge thank you again for helping us with our hedgehog survey in 2014.

Thank you to everyone who sent in photos. Please carry on sending them; it's really interesting to see how things are going and also so we can share them with everyone else!

Below left; Helen set up a camera trap by one of her tunnels and was able to catch this rat passing through. This also meant that its footprints could be correctly identified.

Below middle; probably the bleakest site surveyed this year, but it's important for us to include these habitats so we can say for certain that hedgehogs aren't using them. Thank you to Suki for persevering with this site!

Below right; Cate, one of our volunteers in South Wales was lucky enough to come across a hog having a snooze after visiting one of her tunnels!



FOOTPRINT ID QUIZ

It's not just hedgehogs that were happy to go through the tunnels. Below are a selection of prints that were collected this year; test your footprint ID skills to see if you can name them all (answers at the bottom of the page). All footprints are to scale.

HINT: not all of them are mammals...

Scale bar (cm)

