

### London Borough of Bromley Hedgehog Report 2023

Sadly only 8 records of IUCN Red Listed Hedgehogs were received by Bromley Biodiversity Partnership in 2023, from 7 locations. This is the worst result since recent hedgehog recording began in the Borough. Numbers of hedgehog records received had been increasing until 2021 starting with 10 (2017) and steadily rising from 21(2018), 33 (2019), 36 (2020) to 51 (2021). Lower numbers were recorded in 2022 (29). In 2023 8 hedgehogs were recorded from 7 locations, all near records from previous years, apart from 1 record from Brook Lane Community Garden (Bromley North) identified by footprints in a survey tube. 1 record was a roadkill (Mason's Hill, Bromley). No evidence of breeding was reported. A regular recorder from Petts Wood sent the comment, *'For the first time since wildlife camera installed in 2014 no hedgehogs or hedgehog droppings were seen.'* However, two records were received from Petts Wood this year, one from Priory Avenue and a very late record from Kingsway where an adult was seen in a back garden on 31st December.

Elsewhere in the UK the Wildlife Trust for Lancashire, Manchester & North Merseyside reported hedgehog numbers in 2023 were down 33% and Help4Hedgehogs (a hedgehog rehabilitation group in Sussex) reported that it cared for more than twice as many animals in 2023 as it did in 2022 with more than 200 hedgehogs being admitted in 2023 compared to 98 in 2022. Local Hedgehog expert Mavis Righini reported a reduction in the number of hedgehogs requiring rescue in LBB in 2022 which worsened in 2023, which she presumed to be due to lower numbers of hedgehogs being seen by the public. General UK data for 2023 hedgehog numbers is not yet available. We await publication of 'The State of British Hedgehogs 2023' report in spring 2024 to see the wider UK picture. This may help us to see whether the low numbers recorded in the London Borough of Bromley 2023 are a local phenomenon, possibly due to less vigorous survey promotion, or whether there have been similar declines elsewhere in urban areas. Ever declining invertebrate numbers and erratic weather patterns in 2022 and 2023 may have contributed to low numbers (the RSPCA reported high numbers of dehydrated hedgehogs in 2022) but we also need to redouble our efforts to publicise the survey and encourage wildlife friendly practises in gardens, parks and other green spaces.

We are very grateful to everyone who has sent us Hedgehog Records. In past years the records have helped in the understanding of how hedgehogs are distributed in Bromley borough, highlighted some areas important for breeding animals and suggested where efforts to link greenspaces should be concentrated. Examples of environmental improvements for hedgehogs which have been put in place include some targeted meadow creation and mixed native species hedgerow planting. These provide some protection for hedgehogs and also food for some of the invertebrates hedgehogs eat. Your records also provided evidence required for us to successfully request the installation of 'Hedgehog Highways' to be amongst the Conditions accompanying some successful planning applications.

We would be very grateful if you could send any Hedgehog Records to [bromleybiodiversity@gmail.com](mailto:bromleybiodiversity@gmail.com) with postcode, date and any additional information. Please encourage anyone you know who sees hedgehogs in the borough to do the same. Any publicity for the survey including via social media would also be very welcome. We have produced a new poster which is available on the biodiversity page of Bromley Friends Forum website at: <https://www.bromleyfriendsforum.org> under posters. The hedgehog factsheet and actions needed can be found on the same website under 'Biodiversity, Useful Documents' together with mapped records from 2017-2021. The results for 2022 and 2023 have not been mapped with the only new areas during these two years being Biggin Hill south, St. Paul's Cray and Downham. Hedgehogs are a London Borough of Bromley Action Plan Species, so information regarding how to help them is also available at <https://www.bromley.gov.uk/planning-policy/bromley-biodiversity-species-action-plan-hedgehog> All Bromley's records are submitted to Greenspace Information for Greater London (GiGL) and added to Hedgehog Street's map which can be seen at <https://bighedgehogmap.org> .

### **Bromley Biodiversity Partnership Proposed Actions for 2024**

- Promote hedgehog welfare as per Species Action Plan at <https://www.bromley.gov.uk/planning-policy/bromley-biodiversity-species-action-plan-hedgehog> and by **providing clean water during warm, hot and dry weather.**
- Increase efforts to publicise the hedgehog survey throughout the London Borough of Bromley.
- Send records to LBB Planning Department so that when developments are planned in areas where hedgehogs are present consideration can be given to the installation of 'Hedgehog Highways' linking gardens and greenspaces as part of mitigation/Biodiversity Net Gain.
- Send all records to GiGL.
- If you see a sick or injured hedgehog or a hedgehog in daylight (a sign that the animal may be unwell), please contact Mavis Righini on 020 8462 1168 or Willow Wildlife Rescue on 07858 227 337 (<https://www.willowwildlife.co.uk/>) for help and advice