

Irish Garden Hedgehog Survey – Trail Camera Method



Garden Hedgehog. Photo courtesy of Claire Crowley.

Introduction

The Irish Hedgehog Survey is a project led by researchers in NUI Galway. The aim of the survey is to gather information on the status of the Irish hedgehog population. The garden hedgehog survey will help us understand how hedgehogs use the gardens in our cities, towns and countryside.

This is a citizen science project which means that volunteers play the very important role of collecting the data for the survey. Thank you for taking part in the project. We hope you enjoy it and we look forward to sharing the results with you when the survey is complete.



We are very thankful for the support of our project partners who have facilitated this research. The following organisations have provided funding, administrative and technical support to the Irish Hedgehog Survey which is gratefully acknowledged.



An Roinn Tithíochta,
Rialtais Áiritíúil agus Oidhreacht
Department of Housing,
Local Government and Heritage



Comhairle Contae Mhaigh Eo
Mayo County Council



Kilkenny County Council
Comhairle Chontae Chill Chainnigh



Comhairle Cathrach
Bhaile Átha Cliath
Dublin City Council



Comhairle Chontae na Gaillimhe
Galway County Council



Survey method

You can take part in the survey whether you believe you have hedgehogs in your garden or not. The survey must take place between the start of June and the end of September. It will run over the summer of 2021 and again in 2022.

The survey method is quite straight forward:

1. Set your trail camera
2. Place camera and some bait in a suitable spot in your garden for 7 nights in a row.
3. At the end of the week, check recordings for hedgehogs.
4. Submit your results via a simple online form.

You should complete one 7-night survey for each garden. If you wish to survey the same garden more than once you should leave one month between surveys.

1. Set your Camera

The crucial hours for recording are between 8pm and 8am. You may choose to turn the camera off during the day or automatically set it to come on in the evening and off in the morning.

Cameras should be configured as follows:

Mode, duration, photo series

You should set the camera to record a short video clip (10 seconds) if possible. You may choose to capture both video and photos if your camera allows

If you do not have video capacity, you should set the camera to capture three photos per series.

PIR interval, sensitivity

You should set the PIR interval between triggers at 1 minute. Sensitivity should be set to medium or high.

Resolution

You should use the highest resolution for video and at least 5MP for photos.

Date and Time

You should ensure that you have the correct date and time on your camera and if possible, date and time stamp the video/photos.

2. Position your camera in the garden

Camera

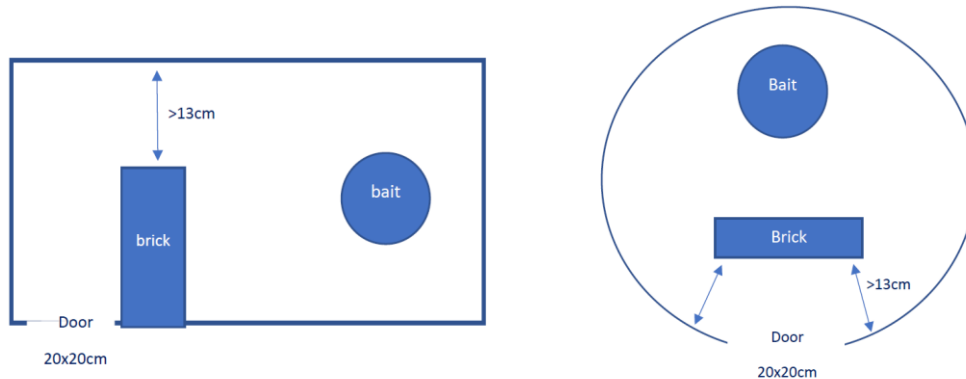
The camera survey also requires that you survey for 7 nights in a row. Cameras should be attached to a tree, fence post or other solid feature that will not blow over or be otherwise disturbed during the survey. Hedgehogs are active at night, so you should prepare and set your camera and bait before dusk. Hedgehogs like to move along linear features so if possible, choose a location which will give a clear view of the ground alongside a hedge, wall, fence, shed or a border between long and short grass.

Bait

You will need to set up a bait station in view of the camera. This involves placing a small portion of cat or dog food (wet or dry – not fish flavour) in a little dish in view of the camera. If you wish, to prevent scavenging by pets or other wildlife, the dish can be covered by a cardboard box, plastic box or large plastic flower pot or bin (size at least 35 x 35cm) with a doorway (15 x 15cm) cut out to

allow them to access the food. A brick or rock placed inside the entrance (as shown in diagram) will deter cats but allow the hedgehog to enter.

You should remove any uneaten bait every morning to avoid it going bad in the heat and attracting pests. You can replace it each evening before dusk. You can leave the camera in the same place for the 7 nights.



Ensure you do a trial run to make sure you are well set up. You can do this by rolling a tennis ball along the ground in front of the bait station and then checking the footage to ensure you have a good view of the bait station and surrounding area, and that your camera settings are correct.



Trail camera secured to tree monitoring bait station set up alongside garden shed

3. View your recordings

On the morning after the 7th night, check the images to see if you saw any hedgehogs or other visitors. Make a note of each night that hedgehogs were recorded and the maximum number seen at any one time. You can also make a note of any other wildlife visitors.

Please rename your picture/video files with your name and the date if possible.

4. Submitting your results

Please submit your results as soon as you can after you complete your survey. It should only take 5 minutes on the online form.

Negative results are just as important as positives, so it is very important that you submit your results, even if you did not find any hedgehogs in your garden – this is vital information for the project!

You submit your results via the online survey form on the hedgehog survey website. Here is the link <https://forms.gle/UwENCRnUstM6BjaC7>. Please only complete one 7-night survey per garden. Use one form for each survey completed.

The form is quite straight forward and uses mostly tick-boxes so it should just take a few minutes to complete. The first part of the form gathers information about your garden and the second part records the findings of your survey. You can upload photos, videos or PDF files on the form. We would also welcome photos or short video clips of your night-time visitors.

Note: this is a google form. Because you can upload files to this form, for security reasons you will require a google account to access it. Most people will have one if you use gmail or an android phone. If you do not, you can create a google account quite easily using your own email address – [see here for details](#). If you have any problems at all. Please email elaine.oriordan@nuigalway.ie and we will get you sorted!

[Click here to enter online survey form](https://forms.gle/UwENCRnUstM6BjaC7)

Links and useful information

If you have any questions, please contact the lead researcher on the project – Elaine O’Riordan by email at elaine.oriordan@nuigalway.ie

You can find out about other surveys and keep up to date with the Irish Hedgehog Survey via the website:

<https://www.irishhedgehogsurvey.com/>

If you see a hedgehog anywhere in Ireland, alive or dead, you can record your sightings via the biodiversity Ireland page here:

<https://www.biodiversityireland.ie/projects/additional-survey-schemes/irish-hedgehog-survey/>

Follow the Irish hedgehog survey on social media

<https://www.facebook.com/IrishHedgehogSurvey/>

https://twitter.com/Irish_Hedgehogs

If you find a sick or injured hedgehog, you should contact your local vet or ISPCA branch to see if they can help. If not, you can get advice and help from

Dublin Hedgehog Rescue 086 8810492

The Hogsprickle Wildlife Carers 086 8624511

Kildare Animal Foundation, Wildlife Unit 087 6201270

Advice on what to do if you find injured wildlife here www.irishwildlifematters.ie