NHMP interim results: Otford



Hedgehog spotted on a camera at Otford

Thank you for taking part in the National Hedgehog Monitoring Programme this year. We are extremely grateful to all of our hub managers, site co-ordinators, citizen scientists and camera hosts. Without the hard work of the NHMP volunteers, the project simply would not be possible.

Together, last year we surveyed 53 sites across England, Scotland and Wales, up from 40 the previous year. This is fantastic news, as it means we have far surpassed our target for the three-year pilot! The surveys have generated a huge number of images; over 9 million have been uploaded to MammalWeb so far. Hedgehogs have been spotted at over half the sites surveyed last year, but this number is likely to rise as more photos are classified. Whilst we work our way through all the data to produce the first hedgehog population density estimates, we wanted to give you a quick update on your local site.

In June, thirty cameras were placed out across Otford and left on for 30 days to photograph anything passing in front of them. Over 296,600 images were uploaded to MammalWeb from these cameras. AI filtered out pictures of humans and blank images, and the rest were made available for volunteers to look through and identify what species had been snapped. This is a crucial step to identify which of the images contain hedgehogs and therefore need to be analysed. Over 740 volunteers have helped with this process, becoming ‘Spotters’ to classify the image sequences from this site in Kent since it was first surveyed in 2024 so thank you very much if you’re one of them. There

are still lots of sequences left for spotting, so please do take a look if you can on MammalWeb.

Of the images classified so far, 36 species of bird and mammal have been spotted at Otford (excluding livestock, dogs, cats and people). Red fox and blackbird appear on the most cameras from the site, appearing at 26 and 20 of the 30 cameras, respectively. Badgers were spotted on 10 of the cameras. Other species appearing at single cameras included buzzard, kestrel and stoat.



Badgers were spotted at 10 cameras across the site.

We're pleased to report that so far, hedgehogs have been spotted at seven cameras, making them the 13th most spotted species across the site. It's likely that there are more that haven't been spotted yet, so do have a look.



Hedgehogs have been spotted at 7 cameras so far

Please note that these are preliminary results and need to be verified. Part of that verification comes from several Spotters agreeing with each other and the AI on what species is in the image. the more Spotters we have viewing and classifying the images, and the more agreement we have between Spotters on what they've seen, the more confident we can be in the results and the faster we can produce density estimates.

Another reason to take part and classify the NHMP images on MammalWeb. Plus, it's good fun and you can see what your local wildlife gets up to when you're not looking! Thank you so much to everyone who has had a go at Spotting so far, if you'd like to have a go, you can find instructions here.



Grey heron were spotted on two cameras

We're currently generating the population density estimates from the sites surveyed in 2024, with 2025 estimates to follow later in the year.

Thanks again, and we'll be in touch soon with more updates.

The National Hedgehog Monitoring Programme is run by The British Hedgehog Preservation Society and People's Trust for Endangered Species, in partnership with Nottingham Trent University, Zoological Society of London, London Hogwatch, MammalWeb and Durham University, and co-funded by Natural England.