

Everyone, however large or small their garden, can do their bit to help wildlife, from the tiniest insect to the largest native mammal. In fact, even if you have no garden there is still a part you can play. Wherever there are trees, plant life and water be it a garden, hanging basket, window box, pond, lake or bowl - all help to sustain Britain's wildlife.

12 Ways to Help British Wildlife

- 1) Put food and water out for birds and mammals during harsh weather (extreme hot or cold).
- 2) Don't use pesticides in your garden, only use natural products eg. bottles over seedlings, stones or eggshells around plants, use soap sprays etc. There are many, many safe alternatives to the harmful chemical pesticides which damage both wildlife and the environment.
- 3) When buying plants or trees try to buy native species.
- 4) Put a cover on your chimney. Every year we receive calls about birds which have fallen down chimneys. This can result in costly work to remove fires or worse the death of a bird. Simple, cheap covers can prevent this problem.
- 5) Take care when clearing gardens as wildlife may be about! Compost heaps may contain sleeping or nesting hedgehogs, dense shrubbery may have nesting birds or again sleeping hedgehogs in them. If removing old sheds, building materials, garden waste that has lain around for some time please be careful as they may be home to wildlife. If wildlife should be discovered please delay removal until the animals have vacated. Delaying your project for a few weeks could mean the difference between life and death for our wildlife.
- 6) Every year hedgehogs and moles are admitted to the rescue, innocent casualties of the garden strimmer. Please, check all areas carefully before using this equipment – you could save a life!
- 7) Trees and bushes should be carefully checked before you trim or fell them...they may be home to nesting birds!
- 8) Every year we receive calls from concerned individuals regarding young birds in the garden not flying. Some fledglings spend a few weeks on the ground before they actually fly so if you have a cat, please try to keep it indoors if you know there are young birds in the garden. This will not hurt your cat and may save lives.

- 9) Never, ever take wildlife away from their natural habitat unless you are certain they are injured or orphaned. Often people will remove animals from the wild as soon as they see them. Hedgehogs for example are nocturnal animals so if seen out in the daytime are probably in need of help. Any animal with an obvious injury will need help as may an orphaned animal if, after careful monitoring from a distance for a few hours, the parent does not return. Always assess the situation first and if you are unsure then contact Freshfields or another rescue or vets before removing the creature from the wild.

- 10) Ensure your garden pond is hedgehog safe. Hedgehogs can swim but will drown if they are unable to climb out of a pond they have fallen into. Ensure your pond slopes gently so that the hog can find purchase to climb out or make sure you stagger one end with stones or similar so that the way out is easy.

- 11) If you have cats, try to keep them in during the day as much as possible during Spring and Summer. Daytime is when the birds are most active and therefore most likely to fall prey to cats. Put a collar with a bell on your cat so that the birds can at least hear them coming.

- 12) Never, ever feed bread and milk to hedgehogs as they are unable to digest it and may die as a result. If you have hogs in you garden feed them dog or cat food and water.