

Public urged to help solve the mystery of why one of Britain's best-loved animals, the hedgehog, is in decline

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Prickole Kidman: rescued by Exeter university biologist. Credit: University of Exeter

The public have been urged to help solve the mystery of why one of Britain's best-loved animals, the hedgehog, is in decline.

Exeter University biologist Fiona Mathews is leading a national drive to count the hedgehog to try to find out how many survive and why their numbers have dropped so dramatically.

Dr Mathews, Associate Professor in Mammalian Biology, who rescued a blind hedgehog she has named Prickole Kidman, urged members of the public to take part in a country-wide count of [hedgehogs](#) they have spotted this year, both dead and alive.

Matthews, Chairman of the Mammals Society, is appealing for help with a new survey to shed light on where they are most scarce, and where they could be thriving.

Dr Mathews said: "Hedgehogs are one of our most appealing animals. Sadly, they seem to be in long-term decline, and we are still not sure of the cause. In fact they are so scarce in many parts of the country, that people can remember exactly how many they have seen and where they were at the time. This is critical information that will help us to understand what we can do to help."

She has launched an online survey on the Mammal Society website, www.mammal.org.uk that takes just minutes to complete.

Laura Kubasiewicz, the Mammal Society's Science officer, said: "It is really important that people who have seen no hedgehogs at all also take part: this will let us identify areas that have a real conservation problem, and in the future will allow us to monitor whether strategies to get hedgehogs back are working."

Provided by University of Exeter

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